AN ONTOLOGICAL BASIS FOR PLATO'S THEORY OF JUSTICE AS A FOUNDATION FOR SOCIAL-POLITICAL STABILITY

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CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that the Thesis:

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I

DEDICATION
This work is dedicated to Uche, Chukwudi and Nnaemeka

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DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is my original work in the Department of Philosophy, University of Lagos.

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ABSTRACT

Plato's theory of justice provides an insight for the analysis of traditional metaphysics. This theory among other things is intended to identify man's innate departmental excellence and use same to contribute to national development. The recognition of the need for specialization through an enhanced division of labour provides the essence of this theory. To an extent, Plato a seminal thinker and a profound system builder through metaphysics seems to have set in motion a machinery for socio - political stability. However, this theory has been criticized on the ground that it portrays an authoritarian and inflexible metaphysics which is the bane of western civilization and the humanism which it influenced. It is against this background that an ontological basis becomes imperative in order to give this theory a mechanism to sustain socio - political stability. An argument has been presented to the effect that an ontological grounding of justice is unnecessary since Plato is an ontologist of a sort. Granted that Plato is an ontologist, however, his conception of ontology is a traditional one. Plato's ontology gives credence to the thesis of Parmenides, "Being is, non-being is not." If being is and non-being is not, it means that becoming, alteration or change is an illusion of the senses. The ontology which this research is advocating is phenomenological ontology which investigates entities from a transparent light. Phenomenological ontology maintains that justice should not be objectified by assuming a rigid, inelastic and dogmatic character. It posits that justice is a being and for a being to be understood comprehensively, all sides or dimensions should be presented whether they make us happy or sad. By getting to the core of justice, an exercise in negation is imperative. The negation of the concept of justice is anchored on transcendental exercise. For the theory of justice as Plato presented it to be feasible ontologically and to lay a solid foundation for society, the nature of man should be taken into consideration. As a being, the concept of justice should not be seen as an exercise in finality but to a large extent, reflect its temporal character. This temporal character portrays the fluid nature of reality.

INTRODUCTION

This work justifies the ontological basis of Plato's theory of justice as a foundation for socio - political stability. Crises, conflicts and wars precipitate social and political instability which result in underdevelopment. Apart from absence of progress and societal development, social and political instability constitute a threat not only to man but the entire human society. Plato experienced a society of an endemic crisis and conflicts which gave him the impression that social and political instability could be eliminated by laying a strong foundation for social justice. In this exercise, he placed premium on the world of Forms because the physical world in his view contains nothing but the illusory aspects of reality. The physical world, he maintains, is always in transition, ephemeral, disintegrative and unenduring. Whatever is built on this structure is chaos- prone. But the world of Forms- a metaphysical world - is intelligible, immutable and perfect. Plato's theory of justice is articulated through the metaphysical theory of the Forms.

In the *Republic*, Plato elaborated his theory of justice by a tripartite division of the soul into;

  i.   the rational – reason

  ii.   the spirited- courage or fortitude

  iii.   the appetitive – emotions. Harmony and peace which are ingredients of justice are attained when each of these parts play their assigned roles without interference. The division of the soul has a correspondence to the social stratification of society into;

  iv.   The Philosopher kings – rulers

  v.   auxiliaries – soldiers

vi.   artisans- workers.

The philosopher kings are empowered to rule, the auxiliaries to defend the city while the artisans should provide the material needs of the society. The strict adherence of these classes to their designated functions is what Plato identified as social justice. The role of reason is so strategic because it co-ordinates the other parts for the purpose of assuring harmony.

From an ontological perspective, Plato's theory of justice is faulty, in terms of laying a foundation for social and political stability. The reason for this position is that he laid much emphasis on human reason. Social justice in our opinion, should reflect human nature .To this end, reason should play a co-ordinating role not to suppress other parts of the human body.

Plato also over-looked the intra -class conflicts among the three classes in society in terms of maintaining peace and harmony. Plato's theory of justice therefore, is based on the old metaphysical thinking of Parmenides "Being is, non being is not" which tends to give rise to hardened positions and the suppression of opposed points of view. This in turn creates an atmosphere of vengeance, intolerance, dogmatism, fixism and above all war (Unah, 1995, 1997, 1998, 2002,2006).

This problem not envisaged by Plato's theory of justice is what we intend to give an ontological grounding. What then is ontology?

Ontology is a branch of metaphysics which investigates Being. What then is Being? When we talk of being, we are referring to what it means to be. We

are talking of "isness" or what it means for something to be at all. In a more technical sense, ontology investigates Being from a transparent dimension in the analysis of a concept such as justice. In ontological analysis, we allow a thing to present itself in its transparent light without putting it into a straight -jacketed conceptual scheme (Unah, 2002). This position is phenomenological but, as Heidegger puts it, ontology is better understood through phenomenology.

Ontology therefore creates an enabling environment and avoids prejudices, assumptions and presuppositions which are hallmarks of traditional metaphysics; but ontology can be properly achieved through the vehicle of phenomenology. This view was made explicit by Martin Heidegger (1962) who postulated that ontology is possible only as phenomenology. His view is based on the position that while ontology is the study of being, phenomenology is the method of letting being be seen in its own true light.

The question now is, why an ontological grounding? Is Plato's theory of justice not sufficient to provide the foundation for political and social stability? In providing a response to these philosophical questions, we must be able to justify why we are adding an ontological dimension to Plato's theory of justice as a basis for social and political stability. Ontology has identified crisis and conflicts as ingrained in the nature of things. If this is the case, it means that reality is always in a constant state of flux. This means that reality is fluid. The justification for an ontological perspective therefore, is to prepare grounds to accommodate opinions and dissenting views that are all aimed at tolerance which would in turn promote social and political stability. The goal of an ontological analysis is to demonstrate that whatever we regard as justice is not a final concept but through constant

re-ordering and re-fashioning, we should be able to adjust and review such concepts in line with current state of reality and man's effort to solve societal problems. A question has been raised on whether Plato's theory of justice is current or contemporary. The answer to this question is simple. Injustice has plagued civil society right from the time of Plato. I am not sure whether we have been able to resolve the problem of justice and injustice in our society today. This is why I think that Plato's theory of justice is of contemporary and current relevance today.

This work started with an introduction which:

1.1   highlighted statement of the problem. Here efforts were made to enthrone justice and minimize injustice;

1.2   dwelt on the purpose and rationale of research. Here attempt was made on how justice and philosophy can merge to consolidate good leadership;

1.3   stressed the need to ground Plato's theory of justice ontologically;

1.4   concentrated on operational definitions of key concepts in the thesis;

1.5   dwelt on research questions, where fundamental questions were raised;

1.6   highlighted the objectives of the research;

1.7   stipulated the scope and limitations of research

1.8   stipulated the methodology of the research including primary and secondary sources of literature consulted and

1.9   centred extensively on literature review. Various literatures were reviewed with the exposition of their strengths and weaknesses.

This work is structured into six chapters. Chapter one is titled

Plato's Background and Philosophical Postulations.

This chapter takes a look at Plato's background, and the major philosophical and social environment under which he grew up. Chapter two is titled Plato's Theory of Forms. This chapter examines Plato's theory of Forms as the anchor of his metaphysics. It takes a critical look at the epistemology, the metaphysics and the morality of the theory of Forms. Chapter three is titled the Philosophical Understanding of Social Justice. This chapter discusses the nature of justice from the Pre-Socratics down to Socrates, to the Sophists and to Plato's notion of justice. Analysis of justice is extended to include morality, virtue and the attainment of political stability. Chapter four is titled the exposition of the concept of political stability. This chapter discusses the philosophical problems of stability and its ontological character. It also discusses Plato's Ideal State, the division of the state into classes and the three parts of the soul. This chapter also discusses some agents of instability such as politics, religion, culture and law. It also discussed the objections to Plato's theory of justice. Chapter five is titled An Ontological Basis for Plato's Theory of Justice as a Foundation for Social and Political Stability. This chapter identified the problems of Plato's theory of justice and observed that the theory is ontologically faulty. This defect is remedied by the ontological justification of the theory which distinguished between traditional ontology and phenomenological ontology. Chapter six is titled The Application of Plato's Theory of Justice to Contemporary Society. This chapter discusses thought and creativity, meritocracy and social justice, leadership and education, democracy, dialogue and political stability. This is followed by summary and conclusion.

1.1   STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Social injustice and by extension political instability is a source of concern to humanity. This problem with serious efforts for its solution by governments at all levels has become a permanent feature of human society. It brings with it social insecurity and sometimes wars. These wars are not morally justified in view of the fact that they are avoidable. Plato witnessed a similar political and social upheaval in Greek society. The wars are as a result of the old metaphysical thinking which tends to repudiate opposed points of view. Man has always aspired to live in peace with his fellowman. But this aspiration has always been unattainable. The reason is because instability is a fundamental aspect of the structure of man's ontology. The origin of every form of instability lies in the fact that we are human (Unah, 2002a:22). Unah outlines Heidegger's analysis of some ontological concepts namely; guilt, objectless anxiety, anticipatory resoluteness or the "Dasein" in man which points clearly to this fundamental insecurity ingrained in human nature. Heraclitus, the exponent of the theory of flux formulated this fundamental insecurity when he postulated that reality is in a state of constant change.

The concept of change is a permanent feature of the human condition. But it is also a paradox that as natural and inevitable as this change is man tries to resist it. In some cases, frequent social change, especially when it threatens the political structures of a society could be described as political instability. The question for critical minds is, can political instability be justified in view of its effects on societal development?

Man is a finite being with a radical posture and he seems to use instability to attain social stability. Hegel agrees with this position when he posited that conflicts and contradictions

are necessary for societal progress. Karl Marx also agrees with this position. What this problem tends to suggest is that man in an effort to attain stability creates some form of conflicts which aggravates social instability. Buddha observed this when he stated that man's effort to attain stability is the cause of human suffering. This is because man has found himself in a state of permanent crisis. All this goes to show that social and political instability are rooted in man's fundamental insecurity. Fundamental insecurity as the name implies needs further clarification. According to Jean-Paul-Sartre, it is that nothingness which lies coiled like a worm in the heart of being (1943:21). What Sartre is saying here is that man has a native quest to be what he is not and not to be what he is. This is like saying that man has imbibed a demonstration effect. A demonstration effect is when an individual develops an appetite ahead of what he could satisfy. For Heidegger, it is a state of affairs that describes man's ability to be and to be not (existentiality) (Unah, 2002:23).

We have identified the problems of political instability as rooted in man's ontological structure. If this position is anything to go by it means that man's propensity to create a crisis situation is part of his nature. Justice as Plato presented it is not likely to proffer a solution to social stability because of its authoritarian character. It is rather to create a new dimension of crisis. Ontological grounding is therefore necessary to make the theory relevant for effective execution of programmes and continuity in human affairs. Ontological grounding in our view is a phenomenological analysis of justice which exposes all facets of the concept for better understanding.

Plato was influenced by the crisis in his social environment which resulted in wars and threatened the existence of his native Athens. Moreover, his beloved mentor Socrates was executed on a flimsy excuse of corrupting the youths through his teachings and profaning the gods. This is a manifestation of injustice, immorality and an attempt to stifle the intellect. He wondered whether this is the world that could satisfy man's political and social needs. Since reality is in a constant state of flux including man it shows that this world is also transitory. He therefore postulated the world of forms as a permanent world of universals where reality exists independently. This theory is the famous Platonic dualism.

There is a dualism in the sense that there are two worlds, the physical world for man's daily activities. The activities here reflect shadows, deceptions and illusions. The world of ideas or Forms is the intelligible world, the immutable world, the unchanging world of reality.

1.2   PURPOSE AND RATIONALE OF RESEARCH

The purpose and rationale of this work is to examine how justice and philosophy can merge to form a formidable force for leadership. Plato, (1997:178) has stated that unless those who are kings become philosophers or political power merges with philosophy there would be no salvation for the human race.

This view was echoed again in *The Laws*, when Plato saw government as a science which should be left to experts. He urges and sincerely believes that it is as absurd to govern by popular vote as it would be to conduct medicine or navigation by popular vote. The error of democracy, according to him, is that it denies the possibility of science in government and

his fundamental political demand is to leave government to those that know how to do it (Robinson, 1969:82-83).

From this point of view, Plato's theory of justice which is anchored on the theory of forms is not likely to sustain social and political stability. His prescription of empowering the philosopher-kings as custodians of knowledge and therefore qualified to rule is not good enough. He extolled the supremacy of human reason which makes a man good. A man is said to be good when he is equipped with the following moral virtues; courage, reason, temperance and justice (Forster, 1942:38). The possession of virtue is what makes a man good.

Aristotle confirmed this when he described justice as the greatest of all virtues and defines it as what is lawful, or what is fair and equal. He identifies two kinds of justice, namely, universal and particular justice. Universal justice is synonymous with virtue and the possessor is able to demonstrate it between himself and his neighbour (Omoregbe, 1993:166). Remedial justice deals with fairness in human transactions such as making promises, taking or giving loans. He also mentioned commercial justice. His theory of justice has implication for peaceful transactions. On a comparative level, Bhuddism and Confucianism, two philosophies from the East also propagated the concept of virtue. According to them, man is good by nature. All men are endowed by nature with a tendency towards goodness and a feeling of goodness. All men have virtues within them, hence virtues are natural. They come from within man not outside him (Omoregbe, 2000:294). From this position virtue is seen as a human disposition and needs a conducive environment for its nurture and subsequent development. How is virtue acquired? Virtue is acquired by

constant and persistent practice through a long period of time. The essence of acquiring virtue is for human and harmonious relationship which would improve social stability. We have discovered over the years that the effort different governments all over the world are making towards this goal has not yielded much result. The United Nations Organisation, The United States of America, Britain and Nigeria have at one time or the other made declarations, constitutional provisions and Bills of right in order to promote a stable society. Take the universal Declaration of right by the United Nations to ensure the protection of fundamental human rights . Is this document valid for all men or just for men in advanced societies? In practice, it is not universal. Let us take an example of a United Nations Charter to illustrate the contradiction of this body in maintaining world peace. Article one of the charter as stated by Palmer and Perkins (2002:xxvii) empowers the United Nations.

> *To Take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats, to the peace and for the suppression of acts of aggressions or other breaches of peace and to bring about by lawful means and in conformity with the principle of justice and international law, adjustment or settlement of international dispute or situations which might lead to breach of peace.*

The spirit behind the proclamation of this charter is quite noble and humane but, it is not enough to make proclamations or constitutional provisions but, we must through a broad based policy evolve conditions conducive for human happiness. Injustice has been identified as the major cause of political instability.

1.3 AIMS

This research aims at evaluating Plato's theory of justice from the point of view of ontology in order to lay a solid foundation for social and political stability.

1.4   OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH

This research seeks to achieve the following objectives.

i.   To analyse the influences and historical background that necessitated the theoretical framework of Plato's socio-political philosophy.

ii.   It seeks to expose Plato's theory of Forms/Ideas

iii.   To analyse the philosophical understanding of Plato's theory of justice.

iv.   To provide a critique of social-political stability

v.   To provide an ontological basis of Plato's theory of justice

To investigate the relevance of the ontological perspective of this theory in our contemporary social-political environment.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following questions are fundamental to the research we are carrying out.

i.   What are the immediate factors that stimulated Plato's philosophical postulations?

ii.   What motivated Plato's theory of ideas/forms?

iii.   How did Plato's conception of justice expose the problems of injustice?

iv.   Does political stability amount to absence of crisis?

v.   In what ways can we articulate the ontological problems of Plato's theory of justice?

vi.   What is the relevance of the ontological perspective of Plato's theory of justice to our contemporary socio-political environment?

1.6 SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF STUDY

This research covers Plato's background, the social, political and the environmental factors that led to his philosophical development. Detailed analysis of his theory of Forms, justice and political stability were discussed. The relevance of the research can be seen from the justification of the ontological basis of Plato's theory of justice to the attainment of socio-political stability.

1.7 OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

Concepts used in this work include:

(a) **THEORY:** A theory is a general body of principles and assumptions or a generalized law that has been confirmed.

(b) **PLATO'S THEORY OF JUSTICE**: means the stratification of the society into three classes of the guardians, auxiliaries and the producers with each carrying out the duties assigned to it without interference. The purpose of his theory is to ensure harmony, peace and concord.

(c) **A SUSTAINABLE PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATION**: is used here to capture a social system that can absorb crisis and conflicts without leading to a dissolution of society. A society here denotes technically, a solicitude for persons. By this is, meant the place for social and political interactions between human beings.

(d) **POLITICAL STABILITY:** This means an atmosphere of peace and tranquillity. This however, does not mean the absence of crisis, but such crisis can be effectively managed.

(e)   **PLATO'S DOCTRINE OF FORMS:** This refers to his metaphysical dichotomy of the physical and the world of Forms. The physical world is the day to day world where opinion is dominant. This world is subject to change and decay. The world of Forms or ideas is the permanent world where reality is eternal. All that we see in the physical world mirrors or copies the world of Forms.

(f)   **ONTOLOGICAL GROUNDING:** In this case, we examine the different interpretations of justice as they relate to human nature.

(g)   **HUMAN NATURE:** Man's complex nature, his real self and the artificial self. In his real self, man behaves the way he is, while in artificial self he hides his true identity.

(h)   **METAPHYSICS:** A branch of philosophy which investigates the beyondness of *being*. Its focus is to study the ultimate reality in a comprehensive manner.

(i)   **ONTOLOGY:** Is a professional presentation of metaphysics. Its business is to investigate what is, or what it means for something to be at all.

(j)   **IDEAL SOCIETY:** Plato's conception of a perfect and a just society where everything operates according to a laid down procedure, and this is anchored on his doctrine of Forms.

(k)   **ARISTOCRACY:** The administration by the best men in society.

(l)   **DIVISION OF LABOUR:** This is the specialization of duties according to the skill of individuals into units of production.

(m)   **AUTHORITARIANISM:** A dictatorial approach to governance. It encourages the suppression of human rights and is capable of promoting violence.

(n)   **PHENOMENOLOGY:** A methodological device which lets *being* be seen in its own true light. A derivative of two Greek words, *phenomenon* (to appear or to present itself for inspection) while *logos* (means discourse). Etymologically, phenomenology means a discourse on appearance.

1.8   METHODOLOGY

This research is library based. As a result, information from relevant materials as they relate to Plato's philosophical postulations are consulted, collected, studied and analysed. Such materials contain his theory of Forms, social justice, and political stability.

The methodology used in this research includes rigorous analysis, critical reasoning and conceptual clarification. Rigorous analysis is a philosophical method of evaluating a given issue. Through rigorous analysis, the issues under reference are examined, dissected and all sides are comprehensively evaluated for a better appreciation and objectivity.

Analysis should not be seen from the point of view of the Logical positivists who reduced philosophical scholarship to a mere analysis. The reduction of philosophy to mere analysis is not only a misconception but a profound misunderstanding of the structure, foundation and scope of philosophy as a discipline. Analysis is indeed part and parcel of philosophy but, it is only a means to an end not an end in itself (Omoregbe, 2001:1). In philosophical analysis, all presuppositions, assumptions and prejudices which tend to colour our ability to make an objective assessment are jettisoned. The presentation of Plato's theory of justice viewed from this background is only a point of view which he universalised for human society. My analysis of Plato's theory of justice is to provide the ontological basis of this theory in order to achieve socio-political stability.

The type of analysis adopted in this work is deductive analysis. Deductive analysis as the name implies, is a process of reasoning by which the mind relates the truth of a given proposition by inferring that the truth of the second proposition is involved in and therefore, derived from the first proposition. A deduction itself "is an inference from necessary premises" (Ogbinaka, 2002:239) Giving credence to this position Momoh, (2002:280) maintains that "A premise is the building block of a conclusion. It is the leg on which a conclusion stands. Whenever an argument is present, there must be a premise or premises which provide the logical, inferential or implicational legs for the conclusion to stand on" The deductive method of analysis has two major objectives, namely;

i.   To explain the relationship between premises and conclusion of valid arguments.

ii.   To provide techniques for the appraisal of deductive arguments, that is, for discriminating between valid and invalid deductions (Ogbinaka, 239). In this research, this method is used to infer a justification for social and political stability (a conclusion) from Plato's theory of justice (a premise) Through this method , a valid and logical argument of establishing an ontological foundation for political and social stability through Plato's theory of justice is achieved.

Critical reasoning is a method of investigation in philosophy. It requires a proper and comprehensive evaluation of a given issue. It is therefore, ontological because it goes beyond a given position in order to generate concepts that are useful in understanding an issue under reference.

Conceptual clarification serves the purpose of delimitation of the scope in meaning of the concepts used. The purpose of this is to clear conceptual confusion in order to lay down a

standard of intelligibility and validity (Benton, 1977:12). This work has made use of rigorous analysis, critical reasoning and conceptual clarification to evaluate objectively and critically Plato's theory of justice as a basis for stability. This effort was made in order to clarify these concepts and their application in philosophical discourse to reduce ambiguity and imprecision.

Two types of sources were considered in this work. They are primary and secondary sources.

Primary Sources include;

a) Plato's major dialogues such *as The Republic ,The Laws ,The Symposium ,The Statesman, Meno ,and The Theataetus.*

b) Plato's Theory of knowledge, Metaphysics, Ethics.

c) Works on the life and times of Plato.

Secondary Sources:

a)   Works on Plato's social and political philosophy

b)   Commentaries on Plato with particular reference to his theory of Forms, justice and the ideal state.

c)   Works on phenomenological ontology starting from Husserl, Heidegger, Sartre and Unah.

1.9 LITERATURE REVIEW

In this research, we intend to operationalize the concept of ontology in analysing Plato's theory of justice. This research is of the view that if the theory of justice as Plato prescribed

is given an ontological grounding, it would lay a solid foundation for social and political stability. The question now is, what would an ontological grounding entail?

The concept of justice in Greek philosophy could be traced back to Anaximander (600-548BC). Adi Ophir, in *Plato's Invisible Cities, Discourse and Power in the Republic* (1991) stated that there must be an original element, a primary stuff from where all things originated.

Parmenides, also a pre-Socratic philosopher, speaks of justice from a mythological dimension. He talks of justice as a divine power, an agent of punishment and revenge which holds the interchangeable keys to the great folding doors in the gates of the path of Night and day (Ophir, 1991:46). Heraclitus, a contemporary of Parmenides, speaking about the law compares it to a city wall which people should fight for as if they were fighting to protect the wall. The pre-Socratics especially Anaximander and Parmenides did not bring in the ontological dimension of justice.

Heraclitus made an effort when he advised people to protect justice as if they are protecting a city wall. The ontological dimension of justice was left out. In *The Republic*, Plato defended justice against the conception of the sophists who saw justice as the interest of the stronger.

For Plato, justice means each class in the society discharging its functions without interference .Plato's position in this regard, is anchored on his firm belief that every individual is naturally endowed. This natural endowment if carefully identified and mobilised will contribute to higher productivity .This is his notion of the division of labour.

Plato's conception of justice although an advanced notion from the Sophists neglected the ontological perspective. This made his prescription ideological. There is the need for the ontological dimension to be examined if political stability should be attained.

The ontological dimension, therefore, exposes the real nature of man in reacting to the situations in his environment. It shows what man is capable of doing without prejudices.

Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) in the *Leviathan (1946)* theorised on the state of nature. The state of nature was the state of man before the emergence of civil society. In such society there was no law, no morality, that is; no sense of right or wrong, good or bad. Man was governed by desires and appetites .Hobbes grounded human nature on selfishness and egoism which if left unchecked will promote insecurity and lawlessness. The need to conduct society on the threshold of peace and security led to the establishment of the commonwealth in order to stabilise society.

The Hobbesian state of nature although a hypothetical political fiction portrays what could happen in any human society in the event of break down of law and order. The Hobbessian state of nature also left out the ontological dimension of the concept of justice. Social justice did not emerge with the establishment of civil society.

Aristotle (384-322BC) in *Nichomachean Ethics* (1963) proposed virtue as a quality realised in justice. In justice, he observed, every virtue is comprehended. The possessor is able to exercise virtue towards himself and his neighbour. Justice for him becomes the greatest of all virtues. He gave a comprehensive definition of justice as what is "fair and equal". Considering the nature of man in the perversion of justice, how and in what manner can this ideal of justice be realised.? Circumstantial and sometimes, man's essential nature can make

him pervert justice. The concept of what is "fair and equal" present some difficulties because it is not easy to present in clear terms what they mean .What is fair may not be equal and what is equal may not be fair.

Aristotle considers justice as fundamental to the existence of societies as well as the attainment of human happiness. Like his predecessors, his conception of justice does not reflect human nature, which is the ontological dimension.

R.H.S Crossman in *Plato Today (1959)* rejected the ideal state of Plato and literally described it as a fool's paradise controlled by a few wise men who out of their compassion for the masses provided them with superstition and ceremonies and popular philosophies fit for their feeble capacities.

Crossman sees Plato's theory of justice as deceitful and to this end cannot provide the much talked about human happiness. Crossman's observation has some merits but he did not extend it to the nature of man. It is the nature of man to accept certain things for a moment but further reflections could propel him to do otherwise. Credit should be given to Plato on the classification of functions among individuals since it is the nature of man to be cut out for certain jobs duties and life-style but it is not out of place for man to be versatile.

Renford Bambrough (1967) in his book *Plato, Popper and Politics* examined Plato's theory of justice from the perspective of modern totalitarianism. He defined totalitarianism as the doctrine that there is a unique and accessible source of infallible guidance on the issues of morals and politics from the state. Bambrough's observation of Plato's theory of Justice as

totalitarian, is in order. The rationale of this work is to bring in the ontological dimension to open up the hidden aspect of justice.

E.S. Haldane's and Francis, H. Simson's *1894 Hegel lectures on the history of Philosophy volume two* evaluates the Platonist theory of justice as a cardinal virtue. They first of all identified other virtues such as wisdom, courage and temperance but gave premium to justice.

Haldane and Simson committed the same error found in Plato's theory of justice. Justice makes a lot of sense when it tries to achieve human happiness irrespective of the type of class one finds himself in society. This in our view, is what philosophical stability entails. Plato's theory of justice as contained in *The Republic* could attain an ontological status if it is modified in the context of human experience. An ontological theory of justice is one that could equip the human mind with versatility, equipped for emergency and self-reliance.

Theodor Gomperz in *Greek Philosophers (1969)* maintained that justice is a foundation which provides the necessary condition of vigorous action in international relations as in home affairs, in private life and lastly in the individual soul. He continued, no state, and no army no band of robbers even, or gang of thieves, can entirely dispense with justice in its unjust proceedings without damage to its internal coherence. This position is a summary of social justice in its entirety. It outlines not only the benefits of justice but also the consequences where there is a perversion. Most of the crises in modern societies are rooted in injustice.

Gomperz's approach to justice brought out the ontological aspect especially when he saw justice as the foundation for peace. The fundamental gap in his thesis is how the human mind can generate the ontological status of justice.

R.S. Brumbaugh (1962) presents a fascinating conception of justice in his book, *Plato For The Modern Age*. According to him, the idea of "Justice" includes more in its Greek original than the word has come to mean today. It combines the notions of "observing the law," doing the right thing," "honesty," "respect for the other persons' property and rights," and "fair play" (equity) as well as taking one's share of civic responsibility. The just man is reasonable, respects the law, and does the right thing. The unjust man is his contrary (Brumbaugh, 1962:67).

The problem with Brumbaugh's position is that he over-emphasised rhetorics and injected it into the concept of justice. Justice could be fully comprehended if all its segments are integrated. This is where he missed the mark.

Jim Unah in two of his books, *Essays in philosophy* (1995) *and Philosophy Society and Anthropology* (2002) noted that the exercise of authority and the application of law which would guarantee public peace, order and thus, political stability are connected with the satisfaction of mutual interest. He explained this by emphasising that the application of brute force, without the provision by the state, of adequate opportunities for the citizens to pursue their enlightened self interests does not and cannot guarantee public peace, order, stability and civilised progress. He further stated that societies without adequate opportunities for human achievement of all sorts are chaos-prone. Our observation in this

work is that adequate opportunities for citizens to pursue their self-enlightened interests do not rule out political instability.

However, in *'Even Nothing is Something'* (2006) Unah maintained that a phenomenological approach to the understanding of reality provides a basis for the management of instability. This approach makes it possible for truth to be seen from all possible angles. This is where ontological basis for stability becomes necessary. It also shows that instability cannot be ruled out in any human dispensation.

Ernst Cassirer in *'The Myth of the State'* (1969:68-69) observed that Plato began his study of the social and political order with a definition and analysis of justice. According to him, the state has no other and higher aim than to be the administrator of justice. The notion of Cassirer in giving the state the power to be the administrator of justice brings him closer to Plato. Allowing the state to be the dispenser of justice amounts to authoritarianism which promotes instability. This is the old metaphysical order which empowers the state to be the custodian of law and order.

O.A. Falaiye (1999) *In Africa's Political Stability, Ideas, Values and Questions* relates the concept of justice to the concept of equality as a social and political ideal. Doing justice according to him would generally mean treating equals equally and unequals unequally according to their relevant differences or inequalities.

Falaiye's analysis of justice and equality is both Platonic and Aristotelian. The reason for this is because he recognised inequality as natural but was tempted to declare that all men

are equal. Inequality is an ontological state of human reality. This is where we disagree with him in the notion that all men are equal.

For Paul More (1970) in his book, *The Religion of Plato*, his doctrine of justice is a compendium of the results of what Greek thought had signified in pre-Socratic age. He evaluated justice from the point of view of its quality identifying it as a force within a man, which acts as a check and a regulation of human behaviour. It brings order out of disorder, proportion out of excess, balance out of discord, peace out of crisis.

What More is saying here is that justice is the inner law of measure, balance and health in man and society. It is a mechanism for social control and regulation in society. It is able to stabilise a conflicting situation. We agree with him in this regard but he left a vacuum on how the human mind could attain this quality of justice. The human mind has the capacity in carrying out transcendental exercises. It can project from an existing state of affairs to a new and better constructed scheme. But in doing this, the exercise is a continuous one in order to follow the fluidity of human experience to fit into circumstances and situations. This is ontology in action. How do we restrain those who are likely to use this inequality to their advantage and oppress the less privileged? Who are those qualified to dispense justice for man and society to ease tension and conflict?

K.R. Popper (1962) in his book, *The Open Society and its Enemies*, made a critique of Plato's theory of justice and ideal state. According to him, Plato's analysis of justice is centered on class rule. This class rule is anti-humanitarian. Popper's critique in this regard is inappropriate because class is natural to man. The concept of equality is unnatural. Popper failed to apply the ontological perspective to the theory of justice.

F.N. Ndubuisi (2005) in *Man and State*, thinks that Popper's position on Plato's theory of justice as anti-humanitarian is out of order. His view is based on the fact that since Plato's theory of justice is to arrest all forms of instability, by allowing man to use his skill in his area of specialty, it follows that Plato's position is a humanitarian one. Ndubuisi's position is justified on the ground that specialisation is emphasised to streamline production. He observed that Plato's rigid class rule amounted to the violation of human rights. This is controversial. In an article titled "Human Rights Abuses in Africa" he argued that human rights is the foundation of justice and that no state or individual has the right to tamper with it because man's freedom is unquestionable (Ndubuisi, 2006: 207) Stressing the importance of freedom in another article titled "Interlocking Concepts in Sartre's ontology of Human Freedom (2005) he maintained that freedom is what defines man. In the words of Sartre, "Man is condemned to freedom" What this means is that even at a gun point man could still make a choice. One's inability to make a choice is already a choice made. If this is the case, can man be blamed for taking wrong decisions? The problem with Ndubuisi's position is that while freedom is desirable ,it has to be regulated in order to achieve order tolerance and accommodation. Wrong actions should be condemned in order to deter others from doing the same.

David Miller in *Social Justice* (1976) sees justice from a just state of affairs. Actions therefore are to be just or unjust if they are done from the point of view of either a just state of affairs or an unjust state of affairs. We may therefore, state according to him as a first step towards the analysis that the subject matter of justice is the manner in which benefits and burdens are distributed among men whose qualities and relationships could be

investigated. He made a distinction between legal and social justice. According to him, legal justice concerns the punishment of wrong doing and the compensation of injury through the creation and enforcement of a public set of rules (the law). It deals mainly with:

(i)   conditions under which punishment may be inflicted, adjusts the scale of punishment to fit the nature of different crimes, and in the sphere of civil law, regulates the amount of restitution which must be made for injuries; and

(ii)   procedures for applying the law- the principles of fair trial and rights of appeal. (Miller, 1976:19 & 22). Miller's approach to social justice did not take cognisance of the ontological dimension. He saw justice as the end of human conflicts. From our experience, this is not the case. What about unjust laws?

'G.W.F. Hegel in *The Philosophy of Right* (1952) elevated idealism to the level of the "Absolute" and rejected Plato's ideal state. First of all, he saw Plato's teaching as going beyond Socrates to depict a polity where philosophy and philosophers rule. His philosophical system especially in *The Republic* was the question of the political feasibility of his ideal. This raises the question of philosophy to actuality. This vision, according to Hegel, is a good aspiration but there is a shortcoming. *The Republic* depicts an ideal for the constitution of a state but the ideal remains an ideal -- a "chimera" or a "Utopia". It fails to be "self producing" to become a "concrete idea". The Platonist ideal for Hegel is too "abstract" because it falls short of man's requirements. One finds it difficult to agree with Hegel because the ideal is a model for perfection. It may not be actualized but it motivates us to improve what ever we are doing.

E.K. Ogundowole (2004) in *Aspects of European Political Philosophy*, observed that Plato's idealism is the starting point of his political philosophy and theory of leadership.

According to him, leadership should be left to those who know the forms because they have better opinion. It follows from here in Plato's view, that the only good government is government by those who know thus, depicting Plato's ideal state as "Philosophocracy". This state of affairs according to him is unrealistic and this is why we feel that an ontological basis is imperative.

In their own reaction, Marx and Engels posited in a famous philosophical work, *The Manifesto of the Communist Party* (1977) that capitalism is the major cause of strife and conflict, which results in political and social instability. They arrived at this conclusion after a critical analysis of capitalism and its dynamics. They observed that such system encourages the exploitation of man, as it compels man to offer his labour for sale to the highest bidder under some dehumanising conditions.

Marx and Engels were of the view that egalitarianism could be attained through a communist society. Such a society could be attained through the dictatorship of the proletariat culminating in the overthrow of capitalism. Marxism reduced the entirety of man's problem to an economic dimension believing that we could only achieve social progress through conflicts, violence and revolutions. Marx's understanding of human society neglected the ontological nature of man. Man's problem is not only economic but dominated by fundamental insecurity.

John Rawls (1972) in *Theory of Justice* hinges social justice on major socio-economic structures and a well-articulated constitution to improve the welfare of man. He recommended equal rights and liberty for all. Social justice therefore, is anchored on fairness. According to him social institutions should not confer morally arbitrary lifelong

advantages on some persons at the expense of others .He condemns as unjust not only racial, sexual, and religious discrimination but also, any form of social and economic inequality. This view amounts to a strong egalitarian form of liberalism .It also rejected the ethical theory of utilitarianism which emphasises the greatest benefits to the greatest number on the ground that the interest of the minority is not considered. This position appears difficult to defend as inequality is natural in human society.

As a further reflection on this position, Ekei (2001) in *Justice As Communalism* posits that man is better understood from the point of view of collectivism rather than individualism. Collectivism he stressed, involves sharing both benefits and burdens, welfarism and participation. The advantages are that the limitations surrounding human existence are such that without mutual co-operations, co-existence and relationships human life is likely to be highly precarious. He also reasons that man is ethically ambivalent, a combination of 'good' and 'bad'. Without communal ideals, motivations and encouragement evil is likely to triumph over good. Ekei's view is centered more on the ethics of traditional African society which encourages unity and solidarity. But unfortunately, the economic realities and the crisis of urbanisation are eroding this essential bond unity in traditional African society. This makes this notion of justice difficult to realise.

Pappas (2003) in *Plato and the Republic* examines the position of Polemarchus by defining justice as doing good to friends and doing harm to enemies. This definition of justice stipulates strict adherence to the obligations in social relationships. Justice is a natural disposition and could better be understood ontologically. Pappas' appears to have missed this link.

H.R. Mukhi (2006) in *History of Western Political Thought, Plato to the Present Day*, argues that *The Republic* which is the centre piece of Plato's political philosophy recommended that justice should be attained through morality. According to him, education is the only instrument which could produce good citizens and solve our many social and economic problems. This view does not reflect the real nature of man because education may not change certain characters of man. This is where the ontological basis is lacking.

Earlier on, Moravcsik (2000) in *Plato and Platonism*, observed that Plato's theory of justice, an offshoot of his theory of ideas, belongs to the old ontology. The old ontology objectifies reality and makes it dogmatic, fixed, rigid and inflexible (Unah, 2006; Okoro, 2006). The humanization of justice is therefore the ontological basis of Plato's theory of justice. Such approach would give justice a human face and a realistic conception.

For E.K. Ogundowole political instability is rooted in injustice. According to him federalism which has not been properly enthroned is the cause of political instability in Nigeria. In *Echoes of Social Change* (1992), and *The Amalgam*, Kakistocracy and *the War Fare Society* (2006) "Federalism has been misconstrued to be a general political theory which could play the role of a political philosophy. This is most unfortunate. He saw this phenomenon as a misconception which has led to wrong perception, misunderstanding, confusion and wrong praxis. He went further to say that the wretchedness of Federalism is at once an expression and a protest against real political wretchedness. Federation is the sigh of the oppressed minority, the heart of heartless political world and the soul of soulless political conditions. It is in a sense now the opium of our people (Ogundowole, 1992:42,

2006:3). Ogundowole is of the view that our federalism is not a genuine one and does not conform to its practical philosophical reality. Why did he make this conclusion? He made this conclusion on the ground that federalism as practised in Nigeria is lopsided with too much power at the centre while the component states are begging for things they are entitled to. But what is Federalism?

B.O. Nwabueze, in *Federalism in Nigeria under Presidential Constitution (1983)*, defines it as the sharing of power between the federal and component states . Nwabueze's position is not convincing as the distribution of power between the Federal and component states is not sometimes streamlined. This is the root cause of political instability in Nigeria. However, he agreed with this position in Democratisation (1993) where he advocated for the states to be autonomous for a genuine federal union.

Nkem Onyekpe (2001) "Managing Forms and Problems of Inequality for Social Justice", stressed the urgent need to abrogate all obstacles affecting the basic rights and freedoms of the individual. The framework of these rights cannot be attained because of their theoretical nature. The way out, in his view, is the breaking of class boundaries of politics and democracy with a view to expansion to a reasonable degree and to make room for all-inclusiveness. This could be achieved through the "full recognition of the institutions of the society such as political associations, labour, students and youth organisations, human rights organisations, professional groups and the media. He concluded that "free development of civil institutions would ensure healthy dialogue and develop enlightened opinion for the benefit and progress of the society" (2001:338).

This thesis is favourably disposed to the above submissions. The difficulty is that our system of government, which is a disguised form of dictatorship is not only close but also lacks the federal machinery to articulate these positions. We see it as a mere suggestion, which has become a routine for past governments. Most of the groups mentioned lack the political will and interest to embrace such a noble and patriotic duty. This accounts for the different phases of our political instability. Before we could move forward we need a high level of political education, an education that could unveil our ignorance and inculcate the common good in our consciousness. This position agrees with Plato's thesis that political stability is attained when those who administer the state do so from a pure intellectual and rigorous education of the mind.

The literature review has captured the first segment of the thesis which is socio-political stability. Effort will now be made to present the phenomenological ontological basis of Plato's theory of justice.

Edmund Husserl in his major work Ideas: *General Introduction to Phenomenology* (1931) conceives phenomenology as the descriptive analysis of essences in general .Not only objects such as the object of sense- perception can be analyzed in this way ,but also the acts of consciousness. For this analysis to be concretized, it must be reduced to an essence or what Husserl refers to as eidectic reduction. He went further to state that a phenomenologist must perform an" epoche" that is, to suspend judgement with regard to the existence of consciousness.

In *phenomenology and the crisis of philosophy* (1965) Husserl embarked upon the project of making philosophy a rigorous science. In this connection, he identified two philosophical standpoints namely; the natural attitude and the phenomenological attitude. While the former represents a lay man's approach to things, reality and understanding, the later takes a critical examination of issues, events and reality. Husserl gave primacy to the phenomenological attitude because it has the capacity to make philosophy a rigorous science.

The Husserlian phenomenology is purely an epistemological project. He followed the footstep of Rene Descartes a French philosopher and mathematician who was concerned with the epistemological foundation for knowledge. This is the perspective in which H. Spiegelberg in *The Phenomenological movement* (1976) described phenomenology. In his conception of phenomenology in a strict sense, he saw it as the cultivation of intuitive experience without limitation to the sensationalistic sources and to the intuitive study of essences. Phenomenology pays special attention to appearances. In other words, it exposes the essential ways in which objects of experience manifest themselves.

A radical dimension of phenomenology was introduced by Martin Heidegger (1889-1976). Heidegger's conception of phenomenology is purely ontological because it deals with the Being of man. In *Being and Time* (1927), *Existence and Being* (1949) and *Introduction to metaphysics* (1959) he identifies the crisis of modern civilization and humanism on the hardened and callous forgetfulness of Being. This oblivion of Being which has resulted in a profound misunderstanding of what Being is needs a proper articulation because according

to him a proper articulation of Being holds the key to the destiny of the human race. The concept of Being is the preoccupation of fundamental ontology which focuses on human finite essence. One is in agreement with Heidegger because his Being project is geared towards the reconstruction of traditional metaphysics which has been responsible for contest, conquest, rigidity and the attitude of dominance. It is on this ground that Heidegger recommends phenomenology as a methodological device that makes entities transparent.

In his insightful contribution, Gleeen Gray in *"The New image of man in Heidegger's philosophy"* (1965) maintains that the genuine originality in Heidegger's philosophy lies as much in his interpretation of human nature in his effort to articulate the meaning of Being. He observed that a problem that has been central for Heidegger through out his life, is the way man relates himself to the world; to his own past, present and future, to the utensils and implements of his everyday life, to the things and creatures of nature, to his fellow human beings and to the complexity of all these. The question of the nature of man is an ontological question not an anthropological one because anthropology does not pose the radical philosophical question of Being which is the business of ontology. Heidegger's mission in the articulation of Being is to show fundamentally, how human transaction of all sorts can be carried out within the matrix of society.

Kenneth Sayre in *Plato's late ontology* (1983) locates Plato's ontology on dualism that is, the physical world and world of forms. Plato's emphasis on the world of Forms as the domain of permanence brought about his concept of appearance and reality. For Plato,

appearance is fluctuating and illusory while the forms or the idea is permanent. This view is the core of traditional metaphysics.

This distinction between appearance and reality attracted a sharp reaction from Frederick Elliston in *Heidegger's Existential Analytic* (1978). For Elliston, the dichotomy between appearance and reality is purely a traditional metaphysical problem. In his view, phenomenological ontology de-emphasises the traditional object and subject dichotomy using the concept of manifest and semblance. When an object shows itself the way it is in itself, the mode of showing is manifest. On the other hand, when an object shows itself in what is not the mode of showing is semblance. What this means therefore is that an object has the capacity to display this double signification.

It is on this ground that Heidegger sees phenomenology as the path or way of access to the true nature of things, it is only as phenomenology that ontology is possible. From here it is concluded that ontology and phenomenology are structurally connected. The business of phenomenological ontology is the disclosure of object of experience.

Ted Honderich in *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy* (1995) conceives ontology as a branch of metaphysics whose focus is the study of Being in general. The study of Being for him embraces such issues as the nature of existence and the categorical structure of reality. Honderich's conception of ontology is apt because he located within the purview of man's power to think metaphysically. Such disposition provides alternative viewpoints to a given issue as one of the goals of ontology.

C.B. Okoro in *'Phenomenology for World Reconstruction'* (2006) maintains that what sustains existence as real existence, is the human prowess of transcendence that rises from nothingness, projects into nothingness and returns into nothingness. His position is that the human mind is metaphysically equipped for the generation of ideas which would shape the world. Plato's theory of justice appears to have laid this foundation which phenomenological ontology has modified for the active realisation of all sorts of human projects (Unah 2002, 2006).

CHAPTER ONE

PLATO'S BACKGROUND AND HIS PHILOSOPHICAL POSTULATIONS

This chapter examines Plato's life and works and his contributions to philosophical scholarship. Here, emphasis is placed on the man Plato, his birth, parentage, early days and education, his philosophical theories, methodology, works, and his academy as well as the effects of his theory on philosophical development.

1.0   THE MAN PLATO

The historical background of Plato presents a man of great intellectual and creative mind. Field (1967) tells us that no philosophical writer of past ages has such permanent interest and value as Plato. This value and interest according to him are fundamental because they tend to shape and articulate our philosophical thinking. This does not mean that we accept in totality all of Plato's philosophical assumptions. By a critical examination of these doctrines, we will be able to adopt, modify and if possible elaborate some of them for a positive philosophical development. A research into Platonism with particular reference to his life, works and the circumstances of his time has a value not only for philosophy but history as well.

A comprehensive document about his early life seems not to be available. This is because the Greeks conception of biography appears to differ from our own. Field (1967) argues that it is curious that the Greeks who invented the scientific study of history seem to have had so little idea of applying their historical methods to the biographical details of individual persons.   Some of these biographies available appear to concentrate on

edification rather than for the truth. Field observed that in the average biography when we are confronted for an account of the events of the life, we find only strings of anecdotes and incidental comments, with little or no chronological connection and coherent thread running through them. This is the problem we encounter in the biographies of Plato. Some of the historical fragments came from Speusippus, Hermodorus and Diogenes to mention a few. His date of birth appears not to be certain. For example, Appollodorus the chronologist of second century B.C. puts it at 428-427BC. This date appears to have a general acceptance among historians of philosophy. The exact date of his birth should not detain us here since we are more concerned with the circumstance of his birth as this has a direct relationship with his early life and philosophical development.

From the account of Field, (1967) we learnt he was the son of Ariston and Perictione both of whom traced their descent back to distinguished ancestral background. Ariston traced his descent to Codrus who according to legend was the last king of Athens. Also Perictione's family descended from Solon. On both sides of the parents, Plato could be described as having an aristocratic background. He was not the only child of his parents. He has two brothers whose names are mentioned in the Republic, Adeimantus and Glaucon who were probably older than he was. He also had a sister, Potone whose son Speusippus a historian later succeeded him as the director of the academy. Naturally, she is older than Plato and this makes him the youngest member of the family (Field, 1967). His name Plato emerged as a result of his physical features and intellectual ability. From the narrative of Field Plato seems to have related well with some of his relations

especially Charmides and Critas. These men as Field tells us later became notorious as the authors of the oligarchic coup d'etat and the white terror which followed the close of the Peloponesian war. From this perspective, it has been argued that Plato's birth and family connections would have given him an upper hand for politics. Burnet stated that Plato's early affiliation to his family appears to embrace the democracy which Pericles instituted. It was later he maintained in the war that Charmides and Critas became prominent members of the oligarchy.

This position by Burnet appears to be plausible because of the political and social circumstances of the time. The rich and noble families who favoured the Periclean democracy were suspected to have contributed for the upkeep of the war as a disservice to democracy , its values and its policies. They saw this development and this led to a turnaround and an opposition to democracy. To say the least, they were ready for its eventual overthrow. The activities of his relations especially in their rejection of democracy in favour of oligarchy affected Plato's interest in politics. One will be correct to say that his interest in public life became unimpressive and this laid the foundation of philosophy in him as a person. There are no details of his boyhood. An insight into his dialogues will tell us a typical life of an Athenian boy. There are certain stories that he was interested in paintings and poetry but had to give up these activities on meeting Socrates who later reshaped his philosophical interest and curiosity. There is also an interesting activity he was involved in as a youth at about the age of eighteen years. He was involved in military service. This position appears not certain considering his background, what kind of role in the military did he play? On the contrary, military

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training and participation appear to be compulsory in Athens because of their constant exploits in war against their neighbours. There is evidence that these years of his military exploits were spent in Attica.

The point has been made at the beginning of this work that few details are known to us about Plato's early life. We are aware that he went through the ordinary education of a free-born Athenian boy which consisted in a two fold course of training in music and gymnastics [Foster, 1942:30). Music education here included the learning and internalization of poetry through recitation. The poems of Homer formed the foundation of such musical education. These poems contain definite moral and religious beliefs whose objective is to mould the character and personality of the individual. This seems to account for his interest in morality as an instrument of shaping society and the individuals that make up the society. In Homer's poems, Plato observes that they contain some elements of perversion rather than to educate. He was of the view that they be reformed with an element of censorship to expunge everything unsuitable to its educational purpose. They must be expunged of all passages which falsify the nature of the gods, by representing them either as doers of evil or as liable to charge (*Republic*, 1997:60-68).

This action is necessitated by the ability to promote courage, boldness and temperance. Death is something that should not be feared, it is rather to be seen as liberation of the soul from the body. Musical education is summarized thus,

> *But there is no difficulty in seeing that grace or the absence of*
> *grace is an effect of good or bad rhythm. None at all. And also*
> *that good and bad rhythm naturally assimilate to a good and bad*

style; and that harmony and discord in like manner follow style; for our principle is that rhythm and harmony are regulated by the words, and not the words by them. Just so he said, they should follow the words. And will not the words and character of the style depend on the temper of the soul (Republic, 1997:90-92).

It would appear to us as if Plato is stressing the importance of music. The essential lesson he is teaching is to achieve simplicity of the mind through music. For in understanding music we also appreciate harmony, beauty and style. These are the ingredients of simplicity. The attainment of this leads to peace and tranquility of the mind and a calm and focused personality. To this end musical education is to produce temperance in the soul.

1.1.1 GYMNASTICS

When we talk of gymnastics we refer to the whole education of the body both physical and dietary. It is targeted at producing a healthy body. A proper education in gymnastics is likely to curtail various illnesses which inflict men in society. Gymnastics has application to modern day athletics whose objective is to train the body for strength and energy. Gymnastics hardens the character as well as the body while music civilizes; thus both are necessary to develop that double nature, at once fierce and gentle which a guardian must possess. To do this properly, they must be blended in the right proportion; too much gymnastics makes a character too rough, as too much music makes it too soft (*Republic*, 1997:92-93). The importance of musical and gymnastic education is the promotion of discipline and determination in the individual. This has an overall foundation in Plato's idea of character formation both in intellectual stamina and in

profound discipline of the mind. The purpose of education is not only for character formation and discipline but also, to liquidate ignorance. Education also develops the intellect by cognizing and synthesizing information for human development. To this end, Plato sees education as a serious business to be built on absolute discipline .Any educational programme that lacks this dimension might not produce the desired result. Plato's legacy on education is quite commendable as it points the way forward for the cultivation of the intellect and for the qualitative development of society.

In the opinion of this thesis, the Platonic education of music and gymnastics has a lot to offer in terms of personality development, moral standard of a high degree and the discipline required for a just and stable society. This is necessary because our society has witnessed a high incidence of indiscipline in high and low places to the extent that, it is threatening the social foundation of society. There is emphasis on wealth as the standard of the value system. Such a society has an advice from Plato thus,

> *No one whose life is spent on gorging food twice a day and*
> *sharing his bed a night, and so on could ever attain real wisdom.*
> *The human constitution cannot stand the strain of the sort of life*
> *for long. Nor would he ever be likely to learn self-control or any*
> *other virtue. What is more, no state, however, good its laws can*
> *retain any stability if its citizens believe in mad extravagance*
> *and exert themselves only of eating and drinking and in the*
> *vigorous pursuit of their amours, inevitably in such society there*
> *is a constant succession of tyrannies, oligarchies and*
> *democracies; and politicians cannot endure the mention of just*
> *government or equality before the law. . (Crossman, 1959:75).*

This saying has a lot of implication for Nigerian political and social environment. Too much luxury and lack of seriousness is exhibited by the political class that they have little or no time to reflect on the objectives of statecraft which is their primary responsibility. A qualitative education helps in shaping behaviour and makes the recipient a responsible member of society. The education Plato is talking about is a traditional type of education which is rooted in morality. As a science of human conduct it focuses on the ought not what is .In other words, morality prescribes what man ought to do without sanction. This is the major difference between law and morality .Law is backed by sanction if it is contravened. Plato's moral education is grounded on idealism which stresses the spiritual dimension. In other words, idealism as an educational theory attempts to bring out what is within the individual. This accounts for his epistemological conception of knowledge as reminiscence or remembrance. For Plato every individual is born with innate ideas which enables him to identify something the individual used to know previously.

For a better arrangement, Plato itemized his educational programme into two segments or categories. According to Joad (1969) the first category of education is meant for all citizens, its main target is to inculcate an attitude of mind which is reverent towards the city's laws and is jealous of its traditions. Citizens that received this type of education will take the same views on all matters of ethics and politics as those who framed the laws and established the traditions. The implication of this type of education is that of its conservative and reactionary disposition. By their training and conviction they will not be able to disobey the laws of the land or to question the public opinion. This is because their lives are governed by these laws and their standards are also formed by them .Plato

puts this view in this way, "they will honour the things which the city honours and despise the things which the city despises ." To this end, they will be contented with the status they occupy and the with the functions they perform in the society to which they belong. Crossman (1959) refers to this type of obedience to constituted authority as a *Noble Lie .For Crossman, a programme of noble lie as fostered by Plato can only survive on propaganda .This is not different from the present educational institutions.* The second category of Plato's education is meant for the members of the guardian class who are endowed with reason. The purpose of this education is to develop and train the mind so as to apprehend eternal truth in the world of Forms. It is in the world of Forms that the knowledge of the *Good and justice are* located.

Furthermore, Joad, states as follows,

> *It is in the light of their knowledge of these Forms that, when they are subsequently confronted with institutions which manifest the form of goodness and laws and acts which participate in the forms of justice, the Guardians will know not only that the institutions are good and the laws and acts, but why it is that they are good and just; for, having recognized the Forms of goodness and justice, they will be able to attribute the qualities of the institutions, laws and acts in question to the manifestation of the Forms in them (Ibid p. 60).*

What Joad is saying here is that the morals and politics of the Guardians are based on the knowledge of reality, and it is the power of this knowledge that they promulgate appropriate laws that prescribe the moral standards of the society. Joad is reinforcing Plato's position that knowledge of reality is possible when the mind is suitably trained and educated to have knowledge. Gymnastics and music have the disciplinary outlook to

enable the mind acquire knowledge of the Forms. This goes a long way to confirm the position of Crossman that, any society that aspires for greatness must cultivate a high level of discipline without which nothing serious can be achieved.

1.1.2 PLATO'S PHILOSOPHICAL THEORIES

Plato's philosophical theories emerged from two principal sources. His social environment and (b) His meeting with Socrates at about the age of twenty. Efforts will be made to discuss in details how these sources shaped and developed his philosophical thinking. Man's intelligence does not grow in a vacuum but needs the experience of his social environment for its nurture. Crossman (1959) made this clearer when he stated, that man is not a completely free intelligence, but in large part at least, a product of his environment, conditioned in his feelings, his thoughts, his actions, by the society in which he lives. And the society in which he lives is itself a product of the historical process, not a pattern of life designed and constructed by rational minds. He maintained that we are in fact creatures of history, and the story of the human race has been the story of our struggle to become, not the creatures, but the creators of history.

With reference to the above, the first question is, how did this position affect Plato's social environment? The point has been made earlier that Plato has an aristocratic upbringing which would have exposed him to politics and public life but his experience in politics aborted this ambition. Why was it so? Popper (1962) tells us that Plato lived in a period of wars and of political strife which was far more turbulent than the time of Heraclitus. While he grew up, the break down of the tribal life of the Greeks had

manifested in Athens, his city of origin, a period of tyranny. This was also followed by the establishment of tyranny or oligarchy which was perpetuated by the aristocratic families. In his youth, Athens was involved in a deadly and bloody war with Sparta a rival state. This war brought its own problems of disease, epidemic, famine and social unrest. This war led to the fall of Athens which also resulted in a civil war and a rule of terror by the group of elites called the thirty tyrants among them are some of his relations. In the crisis that took place, a new wave of democracy was introduced which overthrew the tyrants and ended the reign of terror. He was disturbed by this political trend. The immediate consequence of this was that he lost interest in politics. This experience was recorded in his seventh letter as follows:

> *I went through the same experience as many other; I thought that the very moment I became my own master, I should devote myself to public affairs. And by the hazard of politics a chance of this offered itself to me. For the existing constitution became an object of abuse to many people so that a change took place... and thirty rulers were set up with supreme powers. Some of these happened to be relatives and friends of mine, and they at once called on me to join in this as my proper work. And as was not surprising for one of my age, I felt that they would lead the city from an evil to a righteous way of life and govern to accordingly. So I paid great attention to what they would do. But I saw that in a little time their behaviour had made the former constitution seem a golden age by comparison. For among other crimes, there was their treatment of Socrates, a dearly beloved older friend of mine, whom I should not hesitate to call the most righteous man of his time. Here follow the details of their unsuccessful attempt to force Socrates to implicate himself in their evil activities. When I saw all this and much else like it I was indignant and withdrew myself from contact with the evils of that time. Not long after this the thirty fell and their whole constitution was upset. And once more, but this time with less urgency, the desire to take*

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part in politics and public work began to draw me. Certainly in those troublous times many things were done at which one would do well to be angry. Indeed, it is not to be wondered amidst all these reversals of fortune some people managed to revenge themselves too severely on their enemies. But in general , those who returned to power then showed the greatest fairness and moderation (Field, 1967:6-7) .

Plato's emergence from a wealthy political class positioned him for an active political participation. The seventh letter which we have quoted above shows his withdrawal from politics and public life. The hazards emanating from politics were not encouraging to him. His experience of war and its consequences did not help matters. There was revolution and counter-revolution, manifested in the government of the oligarchy by the tyrants and the return of democracy later. Democracy has its own problems since it has a liberal disposition. For him it was another name for corruption, abuse of office and the oppression of the minority by the majority. As a result of these short comings, he preferred the rule of the best. The reason for this is that it does not give room to all sorts of people. Statecraft in his view requires a profound skill which is not available to every individual. Leadership then should be vested in some specialists with some philosophic disposition. This requirement is necessary because such people are virtuous characterized by courage, temperance, wisdom and justice. For such people decisions inspired by policy formulations should have a human face and should be aimed at promoting human happiness and wellbeing. These reasons provide a philosophical justification for his withdrawal for a life of contemplation otherwise known as philosophy. This dream became very crucial to him and the greatest challenge before him was how to actualize it.

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1.1.3 HIS MEETING WITH SOCRATES

Greek civilization was confronted with two basic problems; (i) how to give freedom to the citizen without anarchy and (ii) how to retain independence of the sovereign state without falling under the constant threat of international war (Crossman, 1959:16). In the assessment of this research, the Greeks seem to have failed in achieving these objectives. Why this failure? Can we attribute it to lack of vision, philosophical or social systemization? Or could it be strategic? A study of Platonism seems to provide a comprehensive background on this subject. "His life was lived in the decline of the city-state. The grandeur of the defeat of Persia had paled along before he was born. More than all his contemporaries, he felt the failure of the Hellenic civilization and analyzed it objectively. He lived as we do, at the end of an epoch of expansion; he was twenty-five years old when the great war between Athens and Sparta ended in the defeat and humiliation of his countrymen. The Athenian empire crumbled before his eyes, and he saw that the real task was not to rebuild Athens but to save Greece. To do that a searching analysis of the city-state and of the nature of man was necessary, for he saw that a league of cities could only be constructed if the cities were fundamentally changed. To that task, he devoted his life (Crossman, 1959:16) .The philosophy of Socrates the master of Plato laid a solid foundation for his own philosophy.

Crossman's observation here is that the analysis of society can rarely be made at the moment when that society is most creative and vital. Reflection and criticism arise only when the rifts begin to show and conflicts refused resolution.

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From this point of view, philosophy becomes the outcome of failure. We do not analyze the best until it is past, then we attempt to recall a golden age, or to reconstruct a society in the pattern of that age. In Greece as in our own days, the age of expansion was an age of activity: theory and analysis began when that expansion ceased, and it became clear that planning, reconstruction and self restraint was necessary if collapse was to be averted (Ibid p.16-17).

There seems to be a notion here created by Crossman that philosophy is the outcome of failure which means that philosophy does not react to issues until when a system has deteriorated. This is not correct. Philosophy has become dynamic to the extent that analysis is continuous and systematic. The essence of this is to monitor lapses as is natural in any human system. No system is complete in itself but requires adjustment from time to time. This is the goal of philosophy. Every society appears to be in transition. The current state of our civilization can be humanized through a more dynamic and pro-active philosophical systemization if stability could be achieved. Plato witnessed a high level of moral decay and bankruptcy that he fell back on the philosophy of Socrates as a tool of philosophical reformism. What are the assumptions of Socrates that prompted Plato's theories? Plato's profound interest in philosophy blossomed when he came to the circle at the age of twenty. He was by far the most distinguished pupil of Socrates having imbibed his teachings.

Socrates was out to institute a culture of mental and social liberation. His action was a rejection of the kind of morality and religion which have inculcated into the average

Athenian a rigid standard of right and wrong. His is the outcome of an education for the purpose of prosecuting a war. This war of education for Socrates was not rational. The age of reason which Socrates' epoch symbolizes tried to develop a rational system of education which will promote human happiness and eliminate misery. This new education he called philosophy. Philosophy in this connection meant the search for wisdom. In his view, traditional morality should be rejected and efforts must be made in discovering rational principles of conduct so that social life could have a philosophical justification. The old system of education was fastidious because it was aimed at putting into the mind of the young the orthodox ideas of right and wrong. The new philosophy which has a revolutionary character would aim at developing the reason of the individual to enable him accept those ideas which he has enough reason to justify and to reject all wickedness. This rejection is not based on fear because the individual understood its folly (Ibid p.48).

From this objective, Socrates developed a new out look for philosophy. It must be the self-discipline of reason with two main tasks. To examine and to reject those opinions which it found to be false. To substitute for these false opinions a new set of principles acceptable to reason. (Ibid p.50)

The dimension of this philosophy appears to be focused on precision and clarity. If this is the position, it means that it must have a unique method. And the question would appear as what approach will put this philosophy in an appropriate context. The method designed by Socrates was asking for definitions of concepts such as 'justice' 'courage', or 'piety'

and a process of discussion. He never claimed to teach anybody anything in this discussion but helped people to discover what they knew previously. What this position suggests is that he did not develop new theories to his hearers but as the *Meno* stated, like a midwife assisted the pregnant mind to bring forth its truth. This work of the midwife no doubt is plausible because sometimes, we are not sure of what we claim to know and so, we require a consolidated opinion to justify our claim. This Socrates did to expand the horizon of knowledge. In doing this, he maintained a humble disposition. He maintains strongly that the much he knows is that he knew nothing. This shows a limitation of our claims to knowledge. In this case, this is commendable. But behind this claim the Delphic Oracle of Apollo proclaimed him the wisest man in Greece (Armstrong, 1972:27).

This declaration of the oracle shocked him and this really made him to realize that he may have been divinely authorized to examine all those with the reputation for knowledge. He went out to find out on the authenticity of the claim by the oracle only to confirm that he was right. His conviction was further enhanced when he came to the conclusion that he knew nothing and that those who claim to be wise are even ignorant of their ignorance. He was concerned about the place of knowledge in human activity. This knowledge should be genuine and free from doubt. Plato seems to have taken a cue from here in the development of his epistemology.

In *The Republic*, (1997) Plato was emphatic that there is a difference between knowledge and opinion. According to him, when a man is ready and willing to taste every kind of knowledge and address himself joyfully to his studies with an appetite which never can

be satiated, we shall justly call such a person a philosopher (Republic, 1997:180). A philosopher in this sense is not only one who loves knowledge but also one who seeks after truth. Those who go back propagating opinion in place of knowledge are said to be counterfeit philosophers. Plato's claim here is no doubt correct because a lot of what we claim as knowledge are mostly in the province of opinion. This is why epistemology tries to establish criteria for knowledge, belief and opinion. Everybody is entitled to hold an opinion on any given issue but this does not make such opinion knowledge. Knowledge is established when there is a concrete evidence. In this connection, knowledge is said to be a 'justified true belief'. To justify a belief suggests a high level of conviction which must be backed by evidence. This is a whole project that epistemology is concerned with. The role Plato played in this project is worthy of a philosophical note and is essentially rooted in the philosophy of Socrates. We have already stated how Plato founded his philosophy through an expansion and reformation of the central teachings of Socrates.

1.2   DOCTRINE OF THE SOUL

The concept of the soul constitutes the hallmark of Socratic philosophy. Armstrong (1972) states that he was perhaps the first man in Europe who had a clear and coherent conception of the soul. He saw it as an intellectual and moral personality, the responsible agent in knowing and acting rightly or wrongly. This was a step ahead of what the Greeks had conceived the soul to be. The word soul is translated from the Greek word "psyche" which means the "breath of life", a vaporous substance which was necessary for physical life but was not the seat of consciousness and source of action and could only survive death as a poor strengthless, senseless, feebly squeaking shade. The psyche without the

body was the shadowest sort of ghost (Armstrong, 1972:29). Heraclitus known for his theory of change attaches much importance to the "psyche". For him, it was part of the ever-living divine fire, the Logos. Pythagoreans following orphism saw the "psyche' as a good imprisoned in the body. Between the two positions, the soul did not seem to attract that intellectual status as to make a man a real personality.

The concept of soul for Socrates is crucial for cognition because it provided the foundation for intelligibility, meaning and articulation as far as human affairs are concerned. This is because the order and pattern of the universe suggest an intelligent arrangement. His conception of the soul therefore, brought a new emphasis in the history of human development. Since the soul is central to human cognition, how do we attain its health and goodness? His response is that it is attained when it really knows goodness and acts rightly. To this end, he maintains that knowledge is virtue and ignorance the root of moral evil (Ibid p.30). What does he mean by saying that knowledge is virtue? By this Plato meant that the good as it relates to human conduct is necessary in human decisions. Knowledge here refers to full and immediate realization, sight or intuition, an opening or turning of the "eye of the soul" to a direct and therefore compelling vision of the good. His conception of knowledge is comprehensive, objective and penetrating and a strong disposition to do what is right. Simply put, it is ontological. This type of knowledge is devoid of prejudice, assumptions and emotions. It can be intuited because it has passed the level of opinion that even a skeptic cannot doubt its validity. You can see that Socrates was a founding member of rationalism, a philosophical school of thought. If wrong doing is as a result of ignorance, it means that human beings need to acquire

knowledge in order to eliminate wrong actions. But how does man know when he is doing the wrong thing because it might sound somehow to tell a man that he does not know what he is doing. It is doubtful whether this Socratic paradox was reconciled.

Behind this paradox is a serious philosophical question. It will appear that most actions we consider to be evil could be avoided because if they are examined from the point of view of utility you begin to question the rationale of such an action. From this point of view, one can agree that lack of knowledge can contribute to wrongdoing. Unfortunately, the sort of Knowledge that is being described here appears to be elusive. How do we attain it? With which faculty could it be attained? The knowledge we possess appears to be limited. This does not suggest that we should know everything but it seems that in the process of cognition certain things are coloured by our emotions. We tend to draw a conclusion thinking that we know it when in actual fact a lot remains unknown. This is worse when we are confronted with human crisis. Some times, we proffer solutions for short term thinking that they are of long term. This makes it imperative to understand the Socratic type of knowledge for the benefit of man and society.

Plato's conception of the soul is Socratic in origin although he expanded it further in fact, it became the focus of his psychology. First of all, Socrates conceived the soul as immortal and involved in continuous reincarnation seeking liberation. According to him, the soul is a complex and composite structure of three parts namely; rational, spirited and the appetitive. There is harmony in the individual when each of these parts confine itself to its role. What we are saying is that each of these parts has a function allocated to it.

The rational part is supreme and controls the rest two. If any of these parts abdicates its function and does something contrary to its allotted roles there will be crisis in the individual. This theory corresponds to the three classes of people in Plato's ideal state. The rational part which is the level of reason belongs to the guardians (rulers) the spirited belongs to the auxiliaries (soldiers) who watch over the city while the third level appetitive belongs to the artisans who provide the basic needs of the society. If this arrangement is complied with, there will be harmony which would translate to peace and stability.

On the other hand, if there is a distortion it could result in imbalance in the structure of the individual or in the state. The theory of the soul is therefore fundamental to order, equity and social harmony. The root of this doctrine is pythagoreanism which is also traceable to orphism. The soul for Plato constitutes the intellectual and moral personality, the most essential aspect of man. It is not only the most essential part of man but it is far more real than the body. By this thesis, he gave credence to Socrates his mentor. It is also a reversal of what the Greeks had previously propagated. He tried to present the soul in a Socratic context as personality and in pythagoreanism, he sees the soul as divine. Armstrong puts it clearly thus, "the soul for him is truly divine in the Greek sense; it is a being immortal in its own right and not by gift of any higher divinity, and therefore it has existed always before its dwelling in anybody and will continue to exist after it has won final release from its chain of reincarnation (Armstrong, 1972:40, Rosimini,1999).

The pre-existence of the soul is important for Plato because it formed the basis of his theory of knowledge. Knowledge is reminiscence. In other words, it is remembering what we have known previously. Since the soul is involved in a series of re-incarnation, it is imperative that it keeps its activities free from evil. As reincarnation takes place, there is also a series of purification of the soul. This has implication for reward and punishment which Plato presented in myths especially as it affects the new world (heaven). This theological postulation is the basis of Christianity.

1.3   THEORY OF IDEAS

The historians of philosophy have maintained that the theory of Ideas is the greatest contribution of Plato to philosophical scholarship. This position appears to be objective if we consider the effects on philosophical development. The background of this theory covers the philosophies of Heraclitus, Parmenides, Pythagoras and Socrates his master. The influence of Heraclitus on him was given credence by Aristotle in this way. "Before he ever came to Socrates, he associated with Cratylus and had been initiated into the doctrines of Heraclitus (Haldane and Simpson 1894:4). Heraclitus was famous in his theory of change. According to him everything in life is in a constant state of flux. If everything is in a flux it means that there is no permanence as far as reality is concerned. This shows to a large extent that no human condition is permanent. The nature of change is such that one cannot step into the river twice. By the time one tries to step twice the river must have changed including the person that is involved in the act. His theory of change made a lot of impact in social and political setting. The reason for this is because he believed that the intense upheaval in his time should not persist. His theory brought to

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fore the inevitability of change no matter what we do to resist it. It is also an advice to political actors to guide their affairs with discretion and make a legacy worthy of emulation.

Parmenides, a contemporary of Heraclitus held a different position in respect of reality. For him reality is permanent, immutable. His theory of permanence was introduced through two of his works, "The Way of Truth" and "The Way of Opinion." He could be best described as a forerunner of logic because of his philosophical presentations. For example, he stated, "That which is, and it is impossible for it not to be." This proposition for him is the way of truth. It also means that absolute non-existence is absolutely unthinkable, and thought cannot follow the way of Not-Being. The postulate of Parmenides is that Being is and Non-Being is an illusion. By this postulation, he maintains that permanence is real but change is an illusion of the senses (Unah, 2002).

Another source of philosophical inspiration was the Pythagoreans influenced by orphism, a religious movement. The Pythagoreans believed that the soul is a fallen god imprisoned in the body and is subject to continuous re-incarnation until adequate purification is achieved. This purification will enable it to return to its original place, the divine world. They believed in the intellectual nature of the soul because this power enables it to know the eternal unchanging truth. This truth is the element of Form, order, proportion, limit and harmony in the universe (Armstrong, 1981:7).

The order in the universe seems to be manifested in musical harmony and by the level of order in the heavenly bodies. The order being described here has a mathematical conception. This is reflected in the famous doctrine that, "Things are numbers" (I bid). This statement fascinated many schools of thought and various interpretations were offered. In the welter of these interpretations, there was a fundamental agreement that the essential reality of things can be expressed in numerical terms. Numerical terms offer precision, clarity and minimize ambiguity. This had a tremendous impact on later philosophical and scientific developments.

The contribution of Socrates in the emergence of Plato's theory of Forms could be traced to a speech made by Socrates in the symposium. The speech was on the subject of "Eros". As the name depicts, it is the way that leads to the highest beauty and true being (Friedlander, 1969:4) Socrates in this speech looked beyond the world of sense, the transitory world, the world of appearance. He was talking of that world where change is non-existent, the real world, the world of permanence.

Plato's philosophy in general and his theory of Forms in particular could be best described as a demolition exercise. After going through the philosophies of Heraclitus, Parmenides, Pythagoras and Socrates, he was convinced that going beyond where they stopped could build a system that is enduring, subsisting and capable of achieving human happiness. He examined the society, crises and conflicts that characterize it and agreed with Heraclitus that reality is in a constant state of flux. Since the situation is like this, we have to look beyond the world of crisis and conflict in order to ground stability. This is

where he agrees with Parmenides and maintains that there is a world beyond the world of sense which is immutable, unchangeable and is not associated with decay. As for the Pythagoreans and Socrates, Plato drew the doctrine of the immortality of the soul. The soul pre-existed in the world of Forms and the union with the body is accidental.

Based on these views, Plato saw the need to project into another world, the intelligible world, the world of universals to comprehend the essences of things. The theory of Forms has a dualistic nature: The physical world where what ever we know is derived from the senses and the world of Forms where whatever that is known is derived from thought or what he calls dialectical reasoning. The world of the senses deals with particulars such as John, table, tree or what we can describe as proper names. The world of Forms on the other hand deals with universals. By universals we are talking of the essences or the ontological characteristics of things. For example, mankind, "dogness", colour in general and beauty are all types of universals. When we talk of a beautiful girl we have at the back of our mind the notion of beauty in general. That a particular girl is beautiful is only a reflection of that quality of beauty.

Plato was of the view that concepts such as justice, courage, temperance and even goodness are products of the world of Forms. The realization of these concepts is made possible only in the world of Forms. What we experience in the physical world are imitations or copies of the ideal. This is made possible by man who decides how these things should be apprehended . The world of Forms is apprehended by the intellect, that faculty of the soul empowered to reason. It is able to go beyond the given in order to raise

fundamental questions to human existence and cognition. He had much confidence in this world and this confidence became stronger when his mentor Socrates was tried and executed. He was touched because the reasons for his trial which centered on his promotion of atheism and the corruption of the youths through his teachings were not justifiable. Socrates was a model of perfection, intellectual power and morality. His death was a rejection of intellectualism and the promotion of injustice. His conclusion was based on the activities of the sophists a rival philosophical group who were out to teach men how to be successful in political life. He rejected the teachings of the sophists and described them as not having any contributions to philosophical scholarship. Socrates supported this when he said," Philosophy is nothing else than conscientious objection to prejudice and unreason **(Crossman, 1959:65).**

The problem we have observed here is that almost all human activities have been relegated to a political dimension. By this position we are not saying that political angles to problems do not exist. We have to be sure that political solutions to our problems do not become part of our policy trust. The reason for this is that most of those involved in political decision - making do so from the point of view of party interest and not necessarily in the interest of the country. Such policies may appear expedient today but, what about in the long run? Are such policies capable of transcending party interest for the over all interest of the country? Plato experienced a similar problem when he reflected in his seventh letter thus,

> *I considered these events,' he writes, and the kind of me that were engaged in politics, and the existing laws and customs, and the more I considered and the older I grew, the more difficult did it seem to me to conduct the affairs of the state properly. For it was not possible to effect*

anything without the aid of friends and associates. And it was not easy to discover such men, even when they existed... and it was impossible readily to acquire fresh ones. The laws and customs, also went on deteriorating to an extra ordinary degree. And the effect of all these things on me was this. Where as at first I had been full of enthusiasm for public work, now I could only look on and watch everything whirling around me this way and that until it made me completely giddy. I did not cease to investigate all possible means of improving these points, and indeed of reforming the whole constitution, while as far as the action went, I was awaiting a favorable opportunity. But in the end, I came to the conclusion that all the cities of the present age are badly governed... And I was forced to say, praising the true philosophy, that it is from it that we can come to recognise what is right both in public and private affairs. Therefore the race of men will not have respite from evils until either the race of true and genuine philosophers come to political power or those who exercise power in the cities become by some divine chance real philosopher (Field, 1967:11, The Republic,1997).

What he is saying here made a lot of sense in the Greek city of his day. There was a clear demarcation between true or genuine philosophers and politicians. It is difficult if not impossible to draw such a line of difference today. The genuine philosopher is a product of his environment and cannot be isolated from the politics of his environment characterized by corruption, falsehood, hypocrisy and favouritism. A genuine philosopher in Plato's conception faces a tremendous challenge in the politics of his environment. If he chooses to be apolitical he will be criticized for not contributing to the development of his society. If he decides to join politics in order to contribute to the welfare of his community through good reforms, he will be seen as a theorist because the political terrain is already polluted. His success in this mission depends on his character and integrity. If he joins his colleagues in their looting spree , he is likely to lose his honour

and integrity or else, he might be frustrated out of the system. A genuine philosopher in a corrupt political environment becomes an endangered specie, because he is not likely to realize his political goals and aspirations.

At all times, we should make a conscious philosophical effort when dealing with Plato's theories because, we need to recognize the epoch in which he was theorizing and especially, the environment (both social and political). The task of a social reformer is not an easy one because he needs the support and co-operation of all and sundry to make a meaningful impact. He might lose his life in the process. The problem now becomes, what is the way out? How can the philosopher reformer remain relevant without active political participation.? This is a major challenge which is open for further research. But it is our view that most of the issues in Plato's theory of Forms are beyond comprehension by the senses. No wonder he insisted that a thorough understanding is through dialectical reasoning. Dialectical reasoning is nothing other than metaphysics. Metaphysics is a specialized area of research which requires thought in its purest form. It means that only those who can aspire to this level of knowledge could understand and appreciate the Forms.

One of the greatest legacies of the theory of the Forms is how the "good" can be attained and how man can do it for his own benefit and that of the society. He believed so much in the good as the end of man's intellectual endeavour. At the point of the "good" one is capable of discerning between virtue and vice. One becomes above board in the dispensation of just actions. The good therefore, becomes central to morality which facilitates personality development and leadership qualities.

1.4   OBJECTIVES OF THE THEORY OF FORMS

Plato appears to use this theory to advance dualism. This position enabled him to go beyond the physical world. One will be correct to say, that he used this theory to explain appearance and reality. Appearance and reality constitute a major philosophical gulf culminating in rationalism and empiricism. While rationalism deals with reason in the attainment of cognition, empiricism deals with experience. Both are forms of knowledge valid in their own rights.

The theory also attempts to explain knowledge and opinion. Most of what we claim to know are mere opinions. They are opinions because they are changing and not backed by enough evidence. That is why an opinion can be flawed when the ground for such cannot be justified. The theory also drew a distinction between particulars and universals. Particulars represent individual things which are physical but universals show the essences of things. Essences of things here depict the essential nature of things. In other words, what makes a thing what it is. For example John is a particular man but we talk of mankind to depict that universal umbrella where we can locate a particular man called John. A further analysis of the theory of Forms will be discussed in another chapter in this work.

1.4.1 HIS METHODOLOGY

Plato, following Socrates his master adopted dialectics as his method of philosophizing. Dialectics proceeds from asking questions on the meanings of concepts. The essential nature of dialectics is to expose falsehood, logical fallacies and invalid arguments. It will

appear as if he was a forerunner of Analytic Philosophy. Socrates had advocated that the first task of philosophy was to clear away confusion and misrepresentation by defining the meaning of words. This first task of philosophy was only a preliminary. The true task of philosophy was not to define words but to discover reality **(Crossman, 1959:51).**

The definition of words is a methodology adopted by any branch of knowledge to achieve clarity and precision. In this connection, it is a method in philosophy, a means of philosophizing and not an end in philosophy. We agree with the position that the discovery of reality is the major task of philosophy. Such reality when discovered becomes a philosophical issue and a research focus. This position throws more light on the misconception of Logical positivism that philosophy should not aim at the discovery of truth but to channel its energy on analysis. Analysis has its importance in advancing philosophical scholarship. It tries to define the meaning of the concepts we use in every day speech and without which our various discourses would be meaningless gibberish . Most of the arguments we put forward to justify our claims are either vague or lacking in logical consistency. The result of this is misunderstanding and confusion.

In putting analysis to practical use, Plato using the Socratic dialectic started defining the meaning of concepts such as justice, courage, temperance and virtue. In such an exercise, he noticed that the definitions we give to some concepts do not bring out the meaning of such terms. Their meanings are not exhaustive and sometimes create doubts. Take for instance the concept of justice (a) Paying one's debt (b) Keeping one's promise (c) Doing good to our friends and evil to our enemies. Each of these responses fail to give an

adequate meaning of justice. Justice aims at striking a balance in a dispute between two parties. Any action taken in the dispensation of justice should aim at meeting each of the parties in a dispute . If for example we see it as paying one's debt or keeping one's promise, what if when carrying such an exercise one harms the other party? In the dispensation of justice therefore, discretion should be a guiding principle so as to maintain stability and minimize conflict. Analysis will attempt to make all the parties see the reason why a particular action is taken. The issue of analysis in philosophy is a very serious one. Take for instance, the concept of "good". For Plato the good is attained in the world of Forms. It is the end of our intellectual progress. At this stage we cannot think of any virtue. For G.E. Moore, (1903) a British philosopher the concept of good cannot be defined. The word good is comparable to natural qualities such as colour. In his view, any attempt to define this will amount to a "naturalistic fallacy". By this terminology, he meant putting some terms where they are not applicable. We accept the fact that our inability to use concepts properly is the main cause of communication difficulties in our discourse. Wittgenstein in his attack on Metaphysics supported this position when he stated that our major problem in communication results when language is on holiday. The way out he suggested is to confine ourselves to those things we can say with precision.

Plato also used scepticism as a method of doing philosophy. This method attempted to put philosophy on a solid foundation to avoid error and doubt. The reason for this according to Socrates is that "men are naturally clever and highly educated and yet totally unphilosophic. They can allow reason to be the slave of their passions or other people's

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passions: and education can be merely a useful weapon of self-assertion (Crossman, 1959:52). His reason for this assertion is based on the type of education offered by the sophists. This type of education he observed prepared young men in getting political results and not in the spiritual growth of the future for lasting impressions. The immediate consequence of this trend is that new power is acquired by the individual but he also lacked the moral principle in the use of this power. This produced an individual who is reckless and disregards the good of the society. The philosophy of the sophists tended to undermine the existing social and moral order meant for societal growth and development.

Thrasymarchus, one of the members of the sophists maintained that justice was in the interest of the stronger. The logical conclusion of this thesis is that might is right. This work disagrees with the thesis that might is right. This thesis is rejected on the ground that it will continue to give the strong who are in minority dominance over the weak. It will continue to promote conflict and instability in our social and political order. It will also continue to hinder the attainment of world peace. On the other hand, Thrasymarchus had a point in his thesis because of the fact that human society has given an upper hand to a few men who have no sense of justice. These men believe that the only thing society understands and appreciates is injustice and man's inhumanity to man. This is the cause of societal conflicts both in advanced and developing countries. This trend is worse in developing countries because of the vision of the leaders and their principal officers whose goal is not in the interest of those they claim to serve. This has created a consistent cynicism in the minds of an average citizen who has lost confidence in the ability of his

leaders to serve him better. The way out, just as Plato observed, is a total overhaul and restructuring of the political and social order so as to enthrone happiness and human well being.

DIALOGUES

For Plato, dialogue offered a reconciliation of contending issues. It is used not only to discredit hypocrisy and false pretenses but to attain a concrete objective standard of truth and value. Crossman tells us that in his written works, he tried to give flesh and blood to the Socratic spirit, that is, the spirit of philosophy. The dialogues are not dogmatic assertions of truth, but examples of philosophy at work, exposing falsehood, asserting new principles, finding fault again with these new principles and ascending ever higher in search of laws completely acceptable to reason **(Crossman, 1959:73).**

Plato saw in the *Dialogues* the proper medium of philosophical thought because, it exhibited the fact that truth can only be found by co-operation. *Dialogues* involve questions and answers. Such questions and their responses touch the basic foundations of our thought. Dialogues activate our thought system and provide the intellectual, critical of views, opinions and positions. Some schools are opposed to dialogues because they expose hidden agenda and intrigues . Socrates faced a similar situation because his method of philosophy was a threat to politicians. The playwright, Aristophanes, attacked him bitterly as a scientific buffoon, a dangerous radical who ridiculed sound tradition and made intelligent men look like fools **(Ibid p.45).**

Aristophanes's criticism is not strange. In an attempt to advance a new ideology, one should expect criticisms some destructive and others constructive. The history of philosophy confirms this trend. No theory is free from attacks but what is important is the reason behind the exercise whether to advance the theory or to occasion its extinction. The problem with the social environment where Plato operated is that much emphasis was given to political affairs more than any other human endeavour. These politicians were not interested in advancing truth for mental liberation but how people could achieve fame through political manipulation. The crucial question here is located on the kind of education human societies should aspire to attain. Is it the one that is committed to self-reliance and mental liberation? The type of education that is recommended here, is one that has the capacity to cultivate the intellect and use same to liquidate ignorance. Apart from functionalism, education also has the capacity to transform the individual and society as well.

1.4.2 SCIENCE AND MATHEMATICS

In the study of science and mathematics, Plato observed a rational order as nature has demonstrated. In mathematics, Plato saw the nature of deductive proof and logical sequence. For him, these proofs are axiomatic and self-evident derivable from precise, definition of concepts. Mathematics, especially, Euclid's geometry provided a consistent and systematic body of knowledge. The interest generated in this study suggested to him that it could be applied to human relations. Such application of mathematics to human relations in his view could enhance our understanding of man and society. If we could know justice and truth and beauty, understanding their properties and inter-relations as

we understand Euclid, then, life would be rational and happy. What the scientists and mathematicians were doing for the world of nature, philosophy must accomplish for human society **(Ibid p.51).**

Plato developed much interest in mathematics because he saw in this field of study, precision, exactness and truth. He also saw the logical connection between propositions. The logical connections are necessary and imperative that it fascinated his philosophical curiosity the more. His role in the development of logic cannot be neglected. Also, one of the greatest Pythagorean legacies in Plato's philosophy is the attempt to ground reality in numerical terms. This emerged from the thesis of Pythagoras that "things are numbers". Plato saw in numbers harmony and order which is the basis for stability.

1.4.3 RATIONALISM

This is a philosophical school that bases human knowledge on reason or thought. The concept of reason is the rational faculty of the soul, the most dominant and coordinating part of the soul. It subjects other parts of the soul to a unity to achieve harmony. This school for Plato is also a philosophical methodology. The reason for this is that thought involves creative imagination because it is capable of generating possibilities. Our actions are realized through thought. Thought, then is the source of all human creative abilities. Before an action is conceived, our thought is already in motion trying to give intelligence and meaning to such an action.

The philosophy of rationalism is comprehended in the fact that by the use of reason, a superior kind of knowledge can be attained. This is a contrast from empiricism a rival school, which also grounds human knowledge on sense experience. None of these schools rejected each other's mode of arriving at knowledge, their emphasis is on the level and quality of such knowledge. The foundation of rationalism having been laid by Plato rose to a more significant stage in modern philosophy as demonstrated by Rene Descartes who saw this method of philosophy as one of the first steps in Metaphysics to 'lead the mind away from the sense; he believed that our unborn 'natural light' or light of reason would enable us to penetrate the secrets of the most recondite sciences **(Cottingham, 1988:4).** Spinoza, in his own view described cognition based on 'random experience' as the lowest grade of cognition, a mutilated and confused kind of awareness that cannot provide an adequate presentation of reality. He maintained that reason alone can perceive things 'truly' as they are in themselves **(Ibid p.5).** What about Leibniz? What is his own thinking in terms of the rationalist philosophy? He accepted the notion of an innate 'natural light' of reason which he argues, enables us to know necessary truths; the senses can help us after a fashion to know what is, but they cannot help us to know what must be or what cannot be otherwise. We need to go beyond the senses to gain knowledge of the universal and necessary truths of the sciences (**Ibid).**

Rationalism as propagated in the philosophies of Descartes, Spinoza and Leibniz made a profound effort to raise anew the problem of knowledge and opinion, universals and particulars stressing the limitations of empiricism to provide us with a solid basis for knowledge in metaphysics. They raised an objective position that the senses can provide

not what ought to be, what ought to be takes care of distortions and beyondness which is the hallmark of metaphysics.

There is a strong observation against rationalism which maintains that our present world has gone scientific. The scientific outlook of our world makes rationalism which is rooted in idealism defective. Is there a philosophical justification for this verdict? It is true that science has taken over our world of today but the nature of science also shows that it needs the rationalist spirit for further advancement and articulation. Science proceeds with some basic assumptions through deductions, before a theory is formulated. This stage of assumption adopts some elements of intuition which is basically a rationalist procedure. To this end, a first step for a fruitful study of the rationalists is to be open-minded and willing to discard some of the abuses rationalism has suffered in the past. Some of the problems rationalism has had is that, some schools of thought see it as a kind of 'seamless' web to the extent that any thinker propounding a philosophy with an element of rationalism is seen as committed to speculative Metaphysics.

Speculative Metaphysics has its own function. It tends to provide a map which opens the area and extent of a particular research horizon. It helps to provide a basic foundation for cognition. From this position, it will appear to us that rationalism stands not for a monolithic philosophical doctrine, but rather for a cluster of overlapping views and ideas. This now suggests further benefits of this school of thought in philosophy.

1.4.4 REASON AS THE ULTIMATE IN THE ATTAINMENT OF OBJECTIVE KNOWLEDGE

The correct use of reason will enable us to progress beyond the naïve, common sense view of the world. The universe is an ordered system and every aspect of it is accessible to the human intellect. The impression that mathematics provides an intrinsic clarity and certainty which makes it serve as a model of a well founded and unified system of knowledge may not be correct. There is also a belief, a necessary connection in nature **(Ibid pp10-11).** None of these assumptions of rationalism can be rejected on philosophical grounds without causing some dislocations of far reaching consequence. What is required for a sustainable approach to philosophical scholarship is to see the possible areas of application of these assumptions in order to advance human knowledge.

Our position here, is to re-visit Kant's effort for a recognition of rationalism and empiricism as valid approaches to the attainment of human knowledge. His reason for this submission is that both forms of intuition are present in any genuine cognitive enterprise. The recognition of both forms of intuition by Immanuel Kant as an attempt to reconcile the old quarrel between rationalism and empiricism is elaborated by Unah (1995} thus, "all knowledge begins from experience" (Kant agrees with the empiricists) "but not all knowledge arise out of experience" .According to Unah, some truths are related to experience but they are not derived from experience hence cannot be contradicted by experience. He maintained that this class of truths which though related to experience yet not derived from experience is referred to by Kant as synthetic a priori knowledge. Examples of such truths are found in the laws of physics, mathematics and in

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ethical principles. The propositions expressing these subjects are neither analytic nor aposteriori, but simply synthetic apriori. The truth of physics, mathematics and ethical principles are not derived from experience but from the apriori concepts of human understanding imposed on experience, making the objects of experience appear to man the way they do ,and to conform to the structure of the human mind **(Unah,1995:14-15)**. The point that is made here is that both reason and experience play vital roles in the acquisition of human knowledge. Both are complimentary to the advancement of knowledge.

1.5   PLATO'S WORKS

The history of philosophy shows that its development emerged from transformations, elaborations and modifications. In each epoch, philosophers of various schools attempt to improve the doctrines of their predecessors. This does suggest that new theories seem to arise out of the prevailing philosophical controversies, arguments and ideas. Platonism therefore, is an attempt to modify the Socratic ideal of philosophy. On a comparative level, Socrates loved knowledge and committed himself to its realization but at the same time, claimed that he does not know anything. Plato, on the other hand, was a system builder and an exponent of an authoritarian creed. Socrates was a great conversationalist through his dialectic and Plato the master of prose and style who adopted dialogue as an instrument of attaining knowledge. As Crossman observed, he was a divided personality, a man who deliberately denied himself full realization; a poet who deliberately allowed the springs of imagination to dry up. He was first and foremost, an artist to whom

practical affairs were of small interest. His poems are among the most exquisite we possess (**Crossman, 1959:68**).

His philosophical exposition and analysis which were aimed at the restoration of the intellectual powers of man for effective administration were contained in his *Dialogues*. The *Dialogues* are so important because each tries to address a particular problem socially, politically, metaphysically, epistemologically and morally. These *Dialogues* show Plato as a prolific writer and fortunately for posterity, most of these works have survived thus, giving us a philosophical insight into his personality. In some of these *Dialogues*, he presented his thought with Socrates as the protagonist discovering knowledge by means of questions and answers. The views of Plato in these conversations are hardly known. These characteristics have given a lot of interpretations to the *Dialogues* in terms of what Plato actually posited.

These *Dialogues* are listed as follows: *Apology, Protagoras, Phaedrus, Phaedo, Timaeus, Republic, Statesman, Laws, Theaetetus, Parmenides, Sophists, Politicus, Philebus, Symposium, Meno, Crito and Critas*, Plato maintained that the *Dialogues* are not dogmatic assertions of truth but examples of philosophy at work. They are aimed at exposing falsehood, asserting new principles, finding fault again with these new principles and ascending ever higher in search of laws completely acceptable to reason. The dialogues also he stressed, were the proper media of philosophical thought. This is because they are aimed at immortalising Socrates who was the founder of the philosophical method of dialogues addressing various societal problems in different

perspectives. We will pick some of these works and see the kind of contributions they made to the development of philosophy.

1.5.1 THE REPUBLIC

Many historians of philosophy see the *Republic* as the most important of the *Dialogues*. The reason is that this work, a magisterial treatise, saw justice as an instrument of attaining a social and political order. The work made up of ten books each equally addressing specific problem that extended to some other *Dialogues* such as *The Apology* . The concept of justice as manifested in the soul segmented the society into three classes, each class to confine itself to a particular task assigned to it. In his view, if each class adhered to the job assigned to it there will be division of labour which translates to efficiency, productivity and therefore, harmony in the society. He saw the present political system as subject to decay because of some contradictions and conflicts. To this end, he theorized on a perfect society or ideal state. This state was modeled on a philosophical principle. He was of the view that most societies are governed by men who are ignorant of the principles of statecraft. He reasoned that stability will not be attained until those who rule become philosophers or statecraft merges with philosophy. A stable society will be attained when we apply the strict division of society into three classes in line with the division of the soul into three parts of rational, spirited and appetitive. *The Republic* drew inspiration from his theory of Forms which rejected the world of sense characterized by change, instability and conflict. *The Republic* is the Platonic masterpiece of idealism which builds a perfect society not affected by change or mutability but is eternal, permanent and subsisting. His purpose in this connection is to discover the bond

which holds society together. He identified this bond as justice and then proceeded to offer a definition. He concluded that justice in the citizen and in the society is identical and that if each person is given a position in the social order for which he by his talents is best suited, then the ends of both the citizen and the state will be fully served and the society will be just and perfect. He then proceeded to examine how human potentialities can be best realized in a social framework and the nature of the social institutions required in such a society.

The just or perfect state for Plato is philosophically desirable because in a such state, there is a coincidence between duty and inclination. What is meant here is that if the society is just and virtuous, each person will desire to do his duty. If the individual does not do his duties as expected then, either the state needs to be connected or the individual needs to be improved, by development and adjustment, not by repression and force. The ideal state or Plato's "Utopia" seems to be impossible in terms of attainment in real life. The mission of such theorizing in our view, is to enable mankind aspire to such an ideal for human peace and happiness. Realizing the great difficulty for man to attain the ideal state, he outlined the "second best state" that is; a state ruled by laws which is directed to the ethical/moral improvement of man. The great difference here is that such a state may not be scientifically impeccable as the ideal state under the guidance of philosopher-kings. This state received attention in one of his dialogues as elaborated in the Republic with the title "The Laws" The Laws represents Plato's philosophical maturity and is aimed at revising some of his positions in The Republic.

The Laws is seen as Plato's last and longest sermon to the world in political affairs. The importance of law reigned supreme because it is obvious that society was seen from the point of view of law as social control of behaviour. Law was seen as supreme, though essentially imperfect, instrument for the moral salvation of society: he calls it the 'dispensation of reason **(The Laws, 1970:27)**. He maintained that the entire life of the community must accordingly be governed by a detailed code of laws which will express as far as possible the philosophers' vision of the true good. There is no gainsaying the fact that a firm foundation for a stable and just society is based on the rule of law. The rule of Law not only encourages human freedom in society but also serves as the basis for stability. Lack of it could lead to conflict, crisis and above all anarchy. This is why growth and development are anchored on a good polity which derives from the rule of law.

Before the Laws emerged, Plato has written *The Statesman* which gave much credence to the need to have laws as instrument for effective government. His position in this work is summarized as follows:

> *Thus a free operation of the art of government; legal prescription, by the expert statesman, variable at his discretion, is admirable; but where there is no such statesman, the best legal codes are those which preserve the "traces" of a philosophical statesman's insight, and any established code is to be upheld as given a better hope of sound government than no code at all* **(The Laws, 1970:2).**

While we accept law as crucial to peace and stability, this research is of the view that such laws must be good in the first place and most importantly, such laws require men

who are rooted in the overall good, vision, and the courage necessary for their enforcement. It means that no matter how good a law is, it requires men who are favourably disposed in its implementation. This will in turn contribute to the well- being of man and society. Any law outside this domain is likely to yield negative results. The Laws is a fulfillment of this thesis because it made a realistic contribution to the role of laws in organized societies.

The theory of Forms which has been described as Plato's greatest contribution to philosophy has traces in the *Apology, Phaedo, Gorgias, Meno Symposium* and others. Issues ranging from the soul, its nature and immortality were discussed. Knowledge as recollection from the world of forms in form of reminiscence was also discussed. As a result of the previous existence of the soul in the world of Forms what comes to us as knowledge is our ability to recollect what we have known previously. The details of these methods are not within the scope of this work. Our emphasis is to show how the *Dialogues* present these issues. Mention should also be made of the poetic dimension of Plato's *Dialogues*. There is an attempt by him to discern poetry in all man made things. This observation was elaborated by **Eruvbetine (2002:6)** thus,

> *The Platonic discernment of poetry in all man made things is usually premised on the assumption that all natural/metaphysical substances are poems made by Gods/gods. While the metaphysical realities (essences) of the world of gods constitute the original poems, natural certainties occupy a second order of reality. Poems made explicit to man by gods reflect these realities.*

To this end Plato maintains that poetic success is derived from the manner in which poetry showers forth truth and enriches human life through the delineation of metaphysical, natural and man made phenomena.

The poetic tradition which Plato espoused basically derived from Homer and other poets of his generation. In this exercise, effort is being made to describe truth, beauty and reality through a linguistic device. For Plato the gods remain the custodian of this reality located in the world of Forms. This makes it imperative to watch the kind of poetry to be admitted in his Republic. He was opposed to the imitation of the wicked gods by poets. He rather recommended inspired poets imbued with the spirit of creativity such poets in his view will impact positive qualities of the gods to the philosopher-kings to enable them dispense temperance, courage, wisdom and justice. These are the hallmarks of the philosopher's spirit for leadership capabilities.

The poetic approach to Plato's philosophy could be seen in the various misinterpretation of his work. An understanding of a poetic work demands a high level of metaphysical articulation. The reason for this is that reality is so complex that it requires a second order analysis for a better comprehension. This aspect is seen clearly in his allegory of the cave and the sun. It depicts the necessity of appearance and reality. It reminds us of the urgent need to be objective in our epistemological cognition.

1.5.2 THE ACADEMY

The political environment was distasteful to Plato. The reason for this was that everything concerning knowledge and truth was trivialized and politicized. Politicians had an upper hand and those who were involved in politics were not qualified. This gave him a cause for concern. He de-emphasized practical life and extolled the virtues of academic research as a mechanism for the revivalism of values. This goal that he set for himself is not to be realized in political affairs but requires an academic environment for input and attainment. Moreover, the death of Socrates through execution kept him thinking of Athens as a land that destroys her intellectuals. Today, we talk of brain drain, not finding a lasting solution but doing things that promote it even at an unprecedented dimension. A society where intellectuals are despised will remain underdeveloped both in the quality of ideas and the men that propound such ideas.

Having observed the problems before intellectuals and their contributions to national development, Plato left Athens and embarked on trips overseas . He went to Italy, Egypt, North Africa and Sicily. These visits expanded his intellectual pursuits in many branches of learning such as geometry and science. It was on record that he met Archytas, the geometer who was applying the Pythagorean principles to the government of his native city Tarentum (Crossman, 1959:76). He was impressed by this development as it drew inspiration from the rule of reason. He also met Dion the son-in-law of Dionysius I, a man of great philosophic and practical ability. Plato saw him as a role model of an ideal man, a passionate student of philosophy who was willing to submit himself to the Platonic discipline. Apart from Socrates, Dion was the most important influence in

Plato's life. From the experience he acquired as a result of his travels, he returned to Athens in 387 BC at about the age of forty. He discovered that the Hellenic independence was almost at the lowest ebb and that the social and political antagonism between Athens and Sparta were still on. He saw no prospect in Athens in terms of realizing his intellectual ambition.

As a result of this, he went outside the walls of Athens in a shady garden and founded his academy. This institution was both a school and an institute of scientific research. Crossman tells us that for the first time, the two sides of a modern University life were joined together. Visited by nearly all the scientists of the time, it soon ceased to be an Athenian institution and became one of the centers of Greek learning **(Crossman, 1959:77).**

The students of the University were mostly from the distinguished families of Greece. As the founder, Plato became its first president. The institution was committed to two purposes. One, to act as an organization of pure research for effective societal development and two, as a training ground for young men of leisured classes mostly of noble blood for political career in their various home states. One achievement is clear in this project, Plato had put philosophy on a practical perspective by training men with the moral and intellectual discipline whose objective is to restore the glories of Greece.

The question some critics will ask is whether the academy awarded degrees or certificates to the graduands at that time. There is no evidence in respect of the degree awarded. The

academy seems to be focused on research based on the spirit of philosophy. The products will become leaders of a new and purer Hellenism and take back home the revolutionary programmes of the academy for effective reforms and social transformation. It was designed to produce that spirit of disinterested research of which Socrates served as a model. Its students were to become statesmen, who voluntarily submitted to the law of reason because they believed in the truth and rightness of this law. The purpose of the academy was to see how philosophy could be used in ruling the world in terms of organisation, implementation of programmes through a purposeful, leadership capability. This is contained in the Republic.

The Republic in its outlook embodies a skeletal framework for building a perfect state (ideal state) where every citizen is happy. He imagines himself invested with supreme power and asks how he would use it to save humanity from its present miseries. The task of effecting a change on institutions requires a lot to be done. It is not easy to change institutions without changing men who control these institutions. How can man be changed to enable him attain a stable condition to effectively manage institutions? This is a crucial question and except we address them seriously such an exercise will be futile. In Plato's analysis, on the basis of reconstructing Athens, he discovered three conditions which had kept it in constant conflict. These are class war, bad government and bad education. Every society has suffered from these problems at one time or the other. Some have overcome these problems while some are still battling with them. The nature of these problems is such that they appear to be natural in man and society and the more they are tackled the more they surface in a new dimension. The beauty of it is seen in

man's capacity from time to time to seek for solutions in order to reduce its consequences in our environment.

The greatest challenge facing all societies today is how good governments could be enthroned through a more realistic electoral procedure. A good government should be committed to good education: Good education will in turn reduce unemployment, corruption and enthrone merit, hard work and reward. These put in place will make life worth living, reduce crimes and improve the standard of living. These are the hallmarks of a stable society. A good government should aim at achieving happiness and well being for its citizens and this in the view of this research, should be our aspiration for a better society.

1.6 INFLUENCE OF PLATONISM ON PHILOSOPHICAL DEVELOPMENTS

Plato's contribution to the development of philosophical scholarship is tremendous. The influence is so dominant that Alfred North Whitehead, a process philosopher of the twentieth-century, described all subsequent developments in philosophy as footnotes on Plato's work. His position no doubt, is an eloquent testimony of the landmark of Plato's philosophical insight. A clear picture of what we are saying here will emerge as we describe his influence starting from Aristotle one of his students in the academy, NeoPlatonism as propagated by Plotinus and scholastic philosophy. The modern period will also be considered especially the works of Rene Descartes a French philosopher and

Mathematician. In all these examples, we see clearly the immortalization of Plato and the advancement of his philosophy.

1.6.1 ARISTOTLE 384BC

He joined Plato's academy at about the age of seventeen and became a distinguished pupil of the institution for a period of twenty years. After the death of Plato he developed his own philosophical thought. Philosophy has a tradition of elaboration, modification or adjustment to advance the frontiers of human knowledge. Plato did the same with Socrates his master. In the case of Aristotle, he found many platonic doctrines unsatisfactory because of his scientific disposition notably biology. He criticized Plato's theory of Forms on the ground that the postulation of another world is uncalled for. He agrees with Plato that the object of true knowledge are the essences of things but these are not separate entities existing separately from the things themselves of which they are the essences **(Omoregbe, 1991:52).** The location of the essences of things in a different world is seen by Aristotle as a multiplication of entities and this might continue indefinitely. The theory of Forms according to him does not help us to understand the things of this world because the Forms are separate from the things of this world. Another defect of the theory of Forms is its inability to explain motion, it means that it is incapable also of explaining change. The Forms in Plato's conception are motionless, changeless realities. He argues that if the Forms were really the ideals of sensible things, they too should be sensible entities. Aristotle's position is basically from a scientific point of view.

How did Aristotle resolve this problem? In an effort to resolve Plato's dualism in terms of the physical and the world of Forms, he developed the theory of Matter and Form. Every material being contains two elements namely; matter and form. When we talk of form, we are referring to that which makes a thing what it is. On the other hand, matter constitutes the stuff of which something is made. Matter from this point of view is negative in character. When we say that matter is negative we mean that it is indeterminate. What this means is that matter makes sense through form. For example, when matter receives any form, it becomes that thing the form of which it has received. If it receives, the form of a book, it becomes a book, if it receives the form of a chair, then it becomes a chair. To this end, matter is not anything but assumes the character of anything it receives its form. Form then, is what gives meaning to matter and this is the solution Aristotle offered to Platonic dualism of the Theory of Forms.

He also uses Matter and Form to explain Plato's concept of the soul. The soul in his view, is the principle of life in any living organism. Whatever has life, has a soul, for it is the animating principle of a living being **(Omoregbe, 1991:58).** He maintained that the body is the matter while the soul is the form, for the soul is that which makes a living being a living being. What we understand him to mean here is that without the soul the body has no meaning. Plato saw the soul's union with the body as an accidental phenomenon. The soul is liberated only at death when there is a separation with the body. For Aristotle, this separation does not exist as matter (body) and soul (form) are inseparable.

1.6.2 JUSTICE

His theory of justice was a practical approach for an organized society. Plato's theory of justice in the Republic was improved upon in The Laws but Aristotle developed a consistent theory of justice in terms of benefit, burdens, remedial and distributive. These theories will be explained in chapter three on the theory of justice. From all that we have said so far, we could see how Aristotle developed his master's philosophy within the framework of empiricism.

1.6.3 NEOPLATONISM

This concept represents major philosophical trend fashioned after Plato's philosophy. In this case, individual philosophical schools or theories emerged on a wide range of subjects either in agreement or disagreement with Platonism. Among these individuals is Plotinus (205-270 AD). He began his philosophy with the doctrine of the One. According to him, the One is absolutely transcendent; he transcends existence, being, life, essence, thought and all self-consciousness and everything we can say or think of **(Omoregbe, 1991:89 Armstrong, 1981:180).** He sees the One as incomprehensible which cannot be predicated of anything positive except absolute unity and absolute goodness. It is eternal, immutable, indivisible, outside the realm of time without a past or future.

His philosophy is shrouded in obscurity. There is a great deal of difficulty in elucidation. The reason for this is that he embarked on a project of reviving Platonism. In this exercise, he integrated Pythagoreanism, Aristotelianism and Platonism. A philosophical blending here appears elusive and this contributed to the difficulty in understanding his

doctrines. He talks of another being divine in origin called (Nous) which means mind or spirit. This being emanated from the One, by a process of necessity. For him, mind is also eternal and beyond time. This mind has its original form in Plato's world of Forms. The soul, a divine being, emanated from the mind. The goal of the soul is to have an ecstatic union with the One. Although Plato's philosophy contains some mystic elements it seems to us that Plotinus was deep in mysticism than Plato. This also accounts for the difficulty in understanding his philosophy. In an effort to revive Platonism, he made a (difficult) synthesis of the major philosophical systems of the past **(Omoregbe, 1991:89)**. He appears to be more concerned with the metaphysical aspects of Plato's philosophy thereby overlooking the ethical dimension which is aimed at the improvement of man and society.

1.6.4 ST. AUGUSTINE 354 AD

St.Augustine is a product of Medieval philosophy with a bent of scholasticism. At this time philosophical teachings of Platonism and Aristotelianism crept into the Christian church. According to him, man has a natural desire for happiness; the human heart is restless and will remain restless until it finds the happiness which it seeks **(Omoregbe, 1991:101)**. The happiness he is talking about does not exist in this world of transition but can be attained in a perfect, eternal and immutable environment. For him, this condition can only be attained in God alone. He also made a distinction between the city of God motivated by love of God and the ability to observe the moral law and the city of man motivated by self-love and the flouting of the moral law thereby turning away from God and living the life of sin.

St. Augustine was a theologian who used philosophy to make a rational analysis of theology. At the time of his philosophical postulation, philosophy was seen as the handmaid of theology. With philosophy, theology acquired meaning and intelligence. We will not be wrong to posit that most of the theological issues today originated from philosophy hence their controversial nature.

Augustine's doctrines to some thinkers are not philosophy. This work does not want to be involved in establishing the status of theology and that of philosophy because of time factor but St. Augustine's theological postulations have philosophical foundation. The reason for this conclusion is that when a theologian adopts the philosophical methodology in an attempt to be rational and coherent he is no longer doing theology but philosophy. He attempted to systematize his philosophical views through the vehicle of theology. This is not strange. What is important is to maintain a philosophical position through a consistent logical procedure for the development of scholarship.

1.6.5 THE MODERN PERIOD

In the modern period, the philosophy of Rene Descartes (1596-1650) is adopted for. The reason for this adoption is premised on the tremendous impact this philosopher made in the period under reference. He is unarguably one of the greatest philosophers in the history of western-thought. His achievements, which rank second only to Plato's are the single most important source of our modern intellectual character. He is deservedly known simply as the father of modern philosophy **(Descartes, 1997:vii).** why is he regarded as the father of modern philosophy?

He studied scholastic philosophy. As the name implies, it is a system of medieval philosophy which combines the Aristotelian philosophy with Christian theological doctrines. He saw the urgent need to tackle some issues in this philosophical discourse with a view to transforming it. He was worried by the interpretation given to the doctrine of substantial forms or "hylemorphism" from the ancient Greek terms hyle (matter) and morphe (form or shape) **(Descartes, 1997:viii)**. Aristotle made use of matter and form to resolve Plato's dualism. Form makes a thing what it is while matter constitutes the stuff of which something is made. This means that matter is realized through form. Descartes seems to have a problem with this thesis that he rejected it. What was his reason for this rejection? He stated that, 'When we deny substantial forms, we mean by the expression a certain substance joined to matter, making up with it a merely corporeal while, and which, no less than matter and even more than matter, is a true substance, or self-subsistent thing **(Descartes, 1997:ix)**. For him, the acceptance of substantial forms is the admission of the existence of substances attached to things. This type of substance he sees as immaterial or mental. He concluded that the admission of the doctrine of substance is an error which arose from predicating mental characteristics of physical objects.

From this point of view of the doctrine of substance, the Cartesian philosophy was a revolution, a break away from the scholastic philosophy which he learnt. This methodology in our view is a return of Platonism or a revival of Platonism. We shall now attempt to see a parallelism of some of his doctrines to Platonism.

1.6.6   MIND AND BODY

Aristotle and the scholastic philosophers saw substance as opposed to accident anything that exists on its own, that is, whatever exists in itself and not in another being. An accident for example, does not and cannot exist in itself but only in another being **(Omoregbe, 1996:169).** Colour, for example, exists in other things and not on its own and this makes it an accident. Descartes sees substance in two perspectives namely, corporeal and spiritual. Each kind of substance has one primary quality which constitutes its essence. To this end, the mind is a spiritual substance whose essence is thought while the body is a corporeal substance whose essence is extension. These substances are separate entities which can exist independently. This position is Platonian because Plato saw the mind as accidental in the body seeking liberation. He saw the mind as primarily the domain of thought. Descartes saw the mind and body as separate substances but admitted interaction between them at the base of the skull (pineal gland). This theory of interaction which he did not satisfactorily explain introduced a philosophical problem of its own- the mind body problem.

1.6.7   DESCARTES' RATIONALISM

He was true to the spirit of rationalism by despising and distrusting the senses as reliable source of genuine and certain knowledge. The senses are fluctuating, deceptive and not trustworthy. He extolled reason as the arbiter of epistemological cognition in terms of clear, distinct and certain knowledge. He regarded intuition as the basic tool of reason because whatever the mind grasps through intuition is free from error, from the illusion of the senses and therefore, true without any basis for doubt. This is the basis of certainty.

At the completion of the work of intuition of clear and distinct apprehension of truth by the illuminating light of reason, the second operation of the mind (deduction) starts (**Omoregbe, 1996:169**). With the apprehension of truth the mind now sets out with the process of making inference in order to discover new truths. In this connection, the mind as an organizer in cognition moves from the known to the unknown. The expansion of human knowledge is imperative. This is attained through the capacity of reason and not the senses.

1.6.8 MATHEMATICAL PHILOSOPHY

Descartes was highly impressed with the method of mathematics whose truth is clear, certain and indisputable. This is not the case with philosophy. The reason for this position, in his view, is that philosophy was founded on doubtful and shaky foundation. His objective in this project was to reconstruct philosophy on the method of mathematics to ensure precision, clarity and to eliminate ambiguity. He summarized this view this way,

> *As regards all the opinions which up to this point I had embraced, I thought that I would not do better than endeavour once and for all to sweep them away so that they might later on be replaced either by others which were better or by the same when I had them conform to a rational scheme* (**Descartes, 1997:79**).

To reconstruct a solid structure requires a philosophical base. The framework which Descartes appears to have employed is the mathematical method. The mathematical method is deductive that is, going from step to step from what is known to what is unknown. The question now is how far did he go with this project? Was he able to

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achieve this goal of mathematical philosophy? It is difficult to say whether he achieved this goal but looking at his effort to present philosophy in a geometrical and logical order one will be correct to say that he impacted positively on philosophical development using the mathematical method. What about his conception of logic? His logic was based on intuition and deduction. For him, these two constitute the basic framework of the mind in the search for truth. With this method he appears to have gone beyond the Aristotelian Logic which he maintained does not give us new knowledge about the world but what we have known previously. Aristotle's logic is based on syllogisms. For example, All men are mortal, John is a man. Therefore John is mortal. For such reasoning to be acceptable, the conclusion must be drawn from the premise. Anything short of that is invalid. Our analysis so far shows how Cartesianism is a revival of Platonism. His greatest tool of philosophizing is reason which goes back to the Plato's world of Ideas or Forms. The next chapter will critically examine the theory of Forms with a view to evaluating its epistemological, metaphysical and moral characteristics.

1. 7 SUMMARY

This chapter examined not only Plato's background but the immediate factors that galvanized his philosophical views and development .He had a strong political ambition because of his family background .Things however, turned around when he met Socrates who introduced him to philosophy. This disposition is founded on a critical inquiry and contemplation. The philosophic disposition inculcated into Plato by Socrates was a tremendous influence as it led him into the discovery of the distinction between appearance and reality .The analysis of appearance and reality formed the basis of Plato's

metaphysics. The Pre-Socratics, especially, Anaximander had set the stage for an abstract and speculative metaphysics which grounded reality on the boundless or the indeterminate which the Greeks referred to as "aperion" .This search for ultimate reality laid the foundation for Plato's metaphysic. In order to articulate the dimension of this analysis, Plato developed the metaphysical theory of Forms .The consequence of this theory dovetailed into Plato's dualism of the physical and the world of Forms .The physical world represents the daily runs, arbitrary and the frustrations of human existence. The world of Forms (the intelligible world ,the ontological world) is a perfect world where reality is unchanging .Plato used this theory to accommodate permanence and change as presented by Heraclitus and Parmenides .The theory of Forms cut across Plato's ethics epistemology and metaphysics .It is also the foundation of his education . Plato had much respect for education because of its capacity to liberate the mind. Following Socrates, he restated the view that knowledge is virtue but ignorance the root of moral evil. The knowledge of the Forms can only be apprehended through a rigorous metaphysical contemplation which is made for sound minds. For the attainment of this noble mode of philosophizing, Plato adopted *Dialectics* as his philosophical method. *Dialectics* is anchored on questions and answers in order to confirm the truth and falsity of a proposition. To this end, Plato rolled out various *Dialogues* which contain all departments of knowledge. Subsequent development in philosophy is either an elaboration, modification or the revision of Plato.

CHAPTER TWO

PLATO'S THEORY OF FORMS

2.1   AN EXPOSITION OF PLATO'S THEORY OF FORMS

This research argues the thesis that Plato's Theory of Forms provides a philosophical foundation for social justice and political stability if it is ontologically grounded. This thesis is based on the premise that stability is crucial not only for physical development but also for peace and progress. This theory presents one of the controversial perspectives of philosophical research. The reason for this controversy is that either the critics did not understand the logic of the theory or that they interpreted it to suit their own thinking. The result is ambiguity which ultimately distorted this theory. To this end, open-mindedness which is a hallmark of philosophical research is imperative for a better understanding.

The Symposium, (1999) one of the dialogues of Plato, noted that Socrates made a speech on the subject of 'Eros', the knowledge of which he had received a long time. " The way of 'Eros', the way leading towards the highest beauty and true being was a great intellectual stimulus to the emergence of Plato's theory of Forms. When a man has advanced so far on the quest, he will suddenly descry the supreme beauty which he has been searching for, a beauty eternal, selfsame, perfect, lifted above all mutability. There is an unchanging light of which all the beauties hitherto discerned are shifting reflections. When this light rises above his horizon, the pilgrim of 'Eros' is at last coming to port. The true "life, for a man" is to live in the contemplation of the "sole and absolute

beauty" (*The Symposium* 1999, Friedlander, 1964:4). What Socrates is advocating here has serious implication for the development of Plato's theory of Forms.

The Republic, one of the greatest dialogues of Plato, a magisterial philosophical treatise, espoused the theory of Forms in a fundamental manner which appears to be the best contribution of Plato to philosophy. Books five to seven of the *Republic* dwells extensively on this theory. The gist of the theory is that there are two ways of approaching reality. The commonest aspect is the physical which is the knowledge of everyday activity. The problem with this approach is that opinion is dominant and therefore, does not provide a solid basis for cognition. The second aspect for him is the "Forms" which is the permanent source of reality. All that we come across in the physical world are copies and shadows or images in the world of Forms. There is no change because it is the domain of perfection, the intelligible world or the immutable world (*The Republic*, 1997). One thing should be clear here, the world of Forms has no spatio-temporal location . That is why the Greek concept of ideas will make it better. This means that, another name for the world of Forms is the world of Ideas. This is where concepts such as courage, beauty, justice and temperance exist in perfect order. All that we do at any point in time is to abstract from this ideal world as our guide.

The world of Forms for Plato is not a mental construction as some supposed, it is rather a world that has a permanent existence. This view is supported by **Armstrong (1981:36)**, when he said that "The only fully real beings (things) are the "Ideas" or Forms which exist as external realities which are entirely separate from the world our sense can

perceive". What Armstrong is saying here, is to emphasis the role of the intellect (reason) in a philosopher's pursuit of knowledge which enables him to attain reality. On the other hand, one who depends on sense experience is likely not to attain the knowledge of reality. We must emphasize here that both rationalism and empiricism are valid forms of attainment of knowledge but Plato is saying that in empiricism, reality is constantly changing but in rationalism, it is permanent, a world of absolute perfection. The universe is a shadow of imperfect reflection. The world of Forms in Plato's description is the intelligible world where everything exists in perfect order **(Omoregbe, 1999:139)**. The concept of "Forms" need further clarification. The forms depict the universal ideas of things, the essences of things or put in another way, the real nature of things. In their basic characteristics, they exist as entities, ontological entities, out there in the world of Forms. Plato maintains that these forms are not just ideas in the mind but real entities, capable of independent existence of the human mind.

This theory also explains further the issues involved in universals and particulars. When we talk about particulars here, we are referring to individual changing things such as John, Stone, tree. These objects, things or persons come and go. This is opposed to universals by which we refer to the real nature or essence of things. Here, we are not talking about a particular tree but the essence of dogs stones and trees. Our business here is to abstract those features that are common to all the things that are mentioned. It means that for us to philosophically understand the concept of universals, we must transcend particulars. Another way to put it, is to say that particulars are exemplified in the universals. Without participating in the universals, particulars might not be properly

understood. The theory of Forms therefore, shows to a large extent the essence of justice, temperance, courage, law, goodness. It is also a bold effort by Plato to consolidate his dualism.

Dualism as the word implies, is the doctrine by Plato that there are two worlds namely, the physical world which is the world of our day-to-day experience. The things here are imperfect copies or reflections or shadows of things in the world of Forms. These things here are imperfect copies or reflections or shadows of things in the world of Forms. This is the province of sense experience which is in constant fluctuation, unstable and subject to decay. The other world is the world of "Ideas". This world according to Plato is a transcendence. The word transcendence means "beyondness" or "going beyond", and this is made possible by the productive imagination **(Unah, 1997:78, 2002b, 2006)**. What this means is that, it is the capacity of the mind to make "projections beyond this being to that being in order to connect them into stable regularity or meaningful units. It is the act of forming relations or connecting things or objects in order to render them accessible. It is that ability in man that enables him to project from the present to the future" (2002b:83). What is being said here is that the world of Forms provide the necessary ingredients for all works of creativity. In this world, we can always imagine and create structures that have not been in existence. All works of arts, engineering and architectural designs are all products of this world. It can also be extended to politics with such concepts as justice, equity and fair play. For Plato, this perfect world is there for us to imitate and that is why most of the things we do are done not according to our expectation because we have a faint idea of what real justice or beauty is all about.

Throwing more light on the forms, **Ogundowole, (2004; 26-28)** states that the "forms present an astounding and thrilling conclusion that there is a second world, other than our world of visible things, consisting of the ones themselves, each of which is perfectly, purely, and eternally, what is visible only to the mind itself, that is to say, properly speaking, not visible but intelligible, grasped only by the pure intellect using bare words". These forms, according to him, are required to be the starting point, both for good practice and for good theory. Those who know the forms would have far better opinions about this world than those who do not. It follows from here, that philosophers hold the key to good political reforms. The only good government is the government of those who know, and this means, government of those who know the forms. The ideal city would be a *'philosophocracy'*. Would such a city be actualized?

The crucial question is that if this world is real as Plato maintained, how do we attain such knowledge? He made it clear in the *Republic*, that such knowledge is acquired through Dialectical Reasoning. By dialectical reasoning, Plato meant Metaphysics. What then is Metaphysics? It is first of all a core branch of philosophy. It is a combination of two Greek words, Metataphysika which denotes "after physics or nature. Thus, etymologically, metaphysics has come to mean after the things of nature, or beyond nature. Historically, it is said to have an accidental origin. This accidental origin has been disputed. Andronicus of Rhodes, an editor of the works of Aristotle, arrived at the name after classifying the works of the genius and he named this aspect metaphysics since it came after physics. The word later became popularized as going beyond physics. In a nutshell, metaphysics came to be seen as a discipline which studies realities beyond the

physical world (**Omoregbe, 1996, Unah 1997, 2002a, 2006).** This assumption gave the discipline a pejorative meaning. It was hijacked by those who practice witchcraft, magic, occultism and this led to a misunderstanding of what the discipline is all about. They began to cast aspersions on the discipline. Metaphysics for a professional philosopher is the study of the totality of being, by this, we are referring to nature, scope and structure of reality. **Whitehead, (1929)** defines Metaphysics as the endeavour to frame a coherent, logical, necessary system of general ideas in terms of which every element of our experience can be interpreted. We agree with Whitehead that Metaphysics is the foundation of analysis of our basic experience and cognition. It is a framework of understanding of our thesis and synthesis of knowledge. For Aristotle, Metaphysics is the first philosophy or what he calls the study of Being qua Being and the ultimate basis for the system of the sciences **(Unah 1996:45,2006).**

A critical examination of the definitions given above, show how fundamental metaphysics is to the understanding of philosophy. To this extent, Metaphysics is regarded as the core of philosophy. The reason for this is attested to by the fact that it is ingrained in human nature. Even those who have not been acquainted with philosophy pose metaphysical questions. By asking these questions, we are going beyond what is present. Getting the answers to such questions is a different ball game. These questions raise curiosity and ontological wonder, it makes the mind active in proffering solutions. Plato maintains in *The Republic* that dialectical reasoning ensures the attainment of the knowledge of the Forms. One of the greatest objects of knowledge for him is the "good". The good occupies a strategic position in all aspects of Plato's philosophy; namely ethics,

politics, theory of knowledge and metaphysics. The good is comparable to the sun, which is the source of light and illumination to all other forms. It is the foundation of intellectual achievement and above all, Plato saw the good as the end of intellectual progress (*Republic*, 1997).

Intellectual progress as the name implies is that point where one knows what is good and expected of him. Plato following Socrates, maintains that virtue is knowledge and that ignorance is the root of wrong doing. He argues that certain things we do is as a result of ignorance. If we know the good, nothing will stop an individual from doing it. He is of the view that through a rigorous education of the mind, we should be able to do things that will bring us to the form of the good. What this means is that our actions now become our second nature. The more we do something over and over again, the more we get used to it and master it with a view to specializing in it. The question here is, does it mean that intellectual activity has come to an end? What we understand Plato here to be saying, is that the Form of the good is a paradigm of perfection, which we should strive to attain. Obviously, at this stage, nothing new is created, we can modify, adjust to fit in our desires and expectations but anything we are trying to create is not likely to be seen outside the world of Forms. The world of Forms as typified in The *Republic* is immutable, eternal and subsisting.

Fukuyama (1992:x-xii) argued that liberal democracy may constitute the "end point of mankind's ideological evolution and the final form of human government," and as such, constituted the end of history." He further stated that while earlier forms of government

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were characterized by grave defects and irrationalities that led to their eventual collapse, liberal democracy was arguably, free from such fundamental internal contradictions. He drew an example from Hegel and Marx who believed that the evolution of human societies was not open-ended but would end when mankind had achieved a form of society that satisfies its deepest and most fundamental longings. Both thinkers therefore, posited an "end of history" For Hegel emphasis was on the liberal state while Marx posited a communist society. Fukuyama's position was misunderstood but we think he meant by the end of history not the occurrence of events both large and grave but history understood as a single coherent, evolutionary process, when taking into account the experience of all peoples in all times. For him the natural cycle of birth, death, life would continue to take place. Summarily, his conclusion is that, there would be no further progress in the development of underlying principles and institutions because all of the really big questions had been settled. This point of settlement may constitute a new dimension to the problem .This means that there is no settled question on anything.

Fukuyama made an interesting conclusion but on a critical analysis, we discovered that he found himself in a similar situation with Ludwig Wittgenstein when he wrote the *Tractatus- Logico- philosophicus*. According to Wittgenstein, the solution to the problem of life is in the varnishing of the problem *(Tractatus* 6:52; 6: 521). What we understand Wittgenstein to mean is that life problems are solved by either dissolving or vanishing the problem. This does not suggest a solution to a problem. Vanishing a problem seems like assuming that a solution has been found but in actual fact we are still looking for a solution. To this end, his thesis is more confusing. No wonder, he stated that when we

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have found solutions to all possible scientific problems, the problem of life remains untouched. But since the question of life cannot be answered, it should not be asked. Such questions should not arise at all because they have no answers, and if it is discovered that such questions should not be asked, then it means that they have been answered. If we take him serious, it then means that we should not ask questions if the answers could not be found. Asking a question is a philosophical exercise and such question reflects the nature, scope and validity of human problem. Such questions keep the mind in a continuous search for solutions to the problems of man and society.

Analyzing Fukuyama's conclusion that all big questions arising from our principles and institutions would have been settled sounds unconvincing. These problems in our view are fundamental and settling them to the extent that they no longer trouble us appears to be incorrect. Our analysis of them show our native desires to find solutions to the problems of existence. To this end, it will not appear to be correct to say that all the big questions would have been settled. Even if they appear to ease, they will resurface in a new dimension.

Plato's position on the good as the end of intellectual progress appears to be more appealing because, the form of the good is perfect and so our effort to attain that state will enable us to perfect our actions, by engaging in activities for the benefit of man and society. It means that our continuous search for perfection will be attained without expecting somebody to tell us to do X or Y. The good should be part and parcel of us because it reflects the essence of whatever endeavour we may find ourselves in.

Plato's position in *The Republic* is that the form of the good is accessible to those with a rigorous mental ability and discipline. He attributed this quality to philosophers. He supported this with a profound demand

> *Unless that it happens either that philosophers acquire the kingly power in states, or that those who are now called kings and potentates be imbued with a sufficient measure of genuine philosophy- that is to say, unless political power and philosophy be united in the same person, most of those minds which at present pursue one to the exclusion of the other being pre-emptorily debarred from either there will be no deliverance for the human race (Republic 1997:178).*

This demand is of a fundamental nature. The reason for this is that at the time Plato was making this declaration, philosophy has not suffered an eruption. Another way to put it is that specialization into the different branches of knowledge has not taken place. All disciplines were still under the umbrella of philosophy. Philosophy is derived from two Greek words "Philo" love and "Sophia" Wisdom which means, lover of wisdom. *The Republic* tells us that when a man is ready and willing to taste every kind of knowledge and addresses himself joyfully to his studies with an appetite which never can be satiated such man is called a philosopher. At this stage, a distinction is necessary because we call somebody a philosopher simply for the reason that he loves wisdom. A genuine philosopher is one who loves to see the truth. The concept of truth does not appear to give a comprehensive outlook on who a philosopher is. The question who is a philosopher tends to present a lot of difficulties.

For this aspect of our research to be meaningful, we shall attempt to make some clarifications on who a philosopher is.

a)   **ACADEMIC PHILOSOPHY:** If one takes a degree in philosophy or undergoes a formal training in philosophy, does that make him a philosopher? This question is crucial because one may not be correct to give the title of a philosopher to somebody who possesses a degree in philosophy. One may acquire a degree without acquiring the necessary skills although he has a philosophical background. What does it entail to be a philosopher or to be philosophical?

A professional philosopher should first of all have an orientation of Being, that is, a theory of reality, truth and value **(Unah 1996:8).** This requirement is necessary to enable the individual to have a sharp dimension in analysing intellectual activities. Unah maintains that an orientation of being equips the philosopher with the ontological telescope to execute a comprehensive ordering or re-ordering of experience, of the world. From here, he concluded that the primary task of the philosopher is the provision of a comprehensive and consistent world view. To attain this standard for a consolidation of philosophical exposure, one is required to acquire a high level of intellectual and rigorous spiritual energy and unbounded imagination. This means that as we said before that, it is not enough to have a degree in philosophy but imbibe the skills necessary for this enterprise. A radical exposure to Being therefore, is to have a thorough grounding in basic principles using the tools of philosophy such as logic to be able to present sound arguments.

b)   METHODOLOGY: Some researchers usually tell us that they are using the philosophical approach in their work.. The question is if such an approach is adopted by a researcher, does that make him a philosopher? The affirmation or otherwise of this question brings other issues in place. For example, if a scientist uses a philosophical method in arriving at a solution of a given problem does that make him a philosopher? We think that his mission is to solve a particular puzzle, whether he remains loyal or believes in this method is a different matter. Contemporary scientific theories such as the atomic theory, the theory of relativity, quanta theory and the theory of evolution have reached a high degree of abstraction from empirical data that it is difficult to separate science from philosophy. This has made existentialism, a philosophical school, to argue that the role of philosophy should not be seen as analysis of words and concepts but to find the meaning and purpose of life. On this position **(Walter, 1975...; 157) says:**

> *True philosophy is an art, and a great philosopher is a creative person, an artist, and not only an intellectual involved with dull analysis induction and deduction. Like the artist the philosopher describes life and the world and unveils new vistas of thought and through his own insight and vision. Only a matter of technique separates the artist from the philosopher.*

From Walter's position, we could see that a true philosopher is a visionary, a creative person who has a capacity for contemplation to use a platonic concept. The reason for this is that he does not look at issues piece meal but from a comprehensive perspective. One issue worthy of note is that the philosopher draws inspiration from the platonic world of Forms. The artist uses the world of Forms for various creative activities while

the philosopher uses it to apprehend reality. Based on this position, one could conveniently divide philosophers into these schools.

a) Those who try to construct a comprehensive system which would provide an objective explanation of God, man and the universe in terms of ultimate causes.

b) Those who propound an essentially subjective ideology in an attempt to tell their fellowmen what they consider to be the meaning and value of personal existence.

c) Those who are mainly critical of both systems and ideologies and who concentrate all their efforts on providing a logical framework for coherent thought and language practitioners and professional philosophers can easily be classified into these schools of thought **(Ruch,1974:5).**

d) This accounts for the difficulties in arriving at a definition of philosophy. Each person in this school tries to state his understanding and position and this could be prejudicial. The moment this happens distortions could set in.

We have stated in this section that philosophy suffered an eruption into specialized areas with the advancement of knowledge. This is why we still find elements of relationship and similarities both in the natural and social sciences. Clarifying this position, **Benton** **(1977:13)** states that philosophy and the social studies have a relationship in their most basic concerns which is so close as to amount to identity:

> *to be clear about the nature of philosophy and to be clear about the nature of the social studies amount to the same thing. For any worthwhile study of society must be philosophical in character and any worthwhile philosophy must be concerned with the nature of human society.*

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Benton's position is fundamental because the independent status of these disciplines does not mean that they have lost all philosophical traits. Naturally, there is a high level of symbiosis and interaction between the various branches of knowledge. The nature, scope and methodology of each branch of knowledge might differ but there is a high degree of interaction and relationship. Again, Benton tells us that there is no special problem about the relation of philosophy to the social sciences. In relation to the natural sciences, the job of philosophy is to clear up conceptual confusion and to lay down standards of intelligibility, scientific status and validity. We agree with this position because concepts are the province of philosophy. Philosophy uses concepts as a point of elucidation, clarification and analysis. This aspect of the argument finds more fulfillment in theory of knowledge properly called Epistemology. This branch of philosophy investigates the nature, scope extent and validity of human knowledge. A school of thought has advocated that epistemology be naturalized. What they are saying in essence is that epistemology be integrated into the natural sciences. W.V.O. Quine attempted to do this in his analysis of being and found variables book Ontological Relativity and other Essays (cf Omoregbe 2000:57) His mission in this exercise is to fizzle out epistemology and make it scientific. The area he had in mind is cognitive psychology. We think that this attempt is futile, because there are some epistemological problems which science cannot investigate. If we remember the procedure of science, Some perennial philosophical questions cannot be handled by the scientific enterprise.

Bertrand Russell made this position clearer when he stated that philosophy lies between science and Religion. He puts it thus:

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Philosophy as I shall understand the word, is something intermediate between theology and science. Like theology it consists of speculations on matters as to which definite knowledge has, so far been unascertainable, but like science, it appeals to human reason rather than to authority, whether that of tradition or, that of revelation. All definite knowledge, so I should contend belongs to science: all dogma as what surpasses definite knowledge belongs to theology. But between theology and science is no man's land exposed to attack from both sides. This no man's land is philosophy. All most all question of interest to speculative minds are such as science cannot answer... is the world divided into mind and matter and if so what is mind and what is matter? Is mind subject to matter or is it possessed of independent powers? Has the universe any unity or purpose. Is it evolving towards a goal? Is there a way of living that is noble and another that is based or are all ways of living merely futile. To such questions no answers can be found in the laboratory... The study of these questions, not the answering of them is the business of philosophy (Russell 1961:13&14).

Russell's conception of philosophy appears to be from a traditional point of view. What we mean here is that he tries to locate philosophy from the point of view of metaphysics, epistemology and ethics. Philosophy raises more questions than it can answer. Yes it is true that some questions such as the meaning of life, the purpose of the universe and man's place in it are fundamentally philosophical questions. Not that science cannot answer them but such answers will not be satisfactory. To keep that tradition of philosophical ingenuity, there must be certain features of the world that give rise to ontological wonder and puzzle. Ontological wonder is an extra ordinary kind of perplexity **(Unah 1998:46)** This extra ordinary kind of perplexity exposes the nature of things and man who appears to be the coordinator or the editor of reality. This in turn gives rise to the fundamental questions which on close synthesis give birth to philosophy.

Aristotle confirms this position when he said that it is through wonder that men began to philosophize (**cf. Unah, 2006**) Philosophizing therefore, involves an intimate reflection on the baffling features of man and the world. This is where once more, we fall back on Plato's theory of Forms because according to him, it is only those who have attained a high degree of philosophical maturity that can contemplate on the forms and its features.

2.2 INFLUENCE OF THE PRE-SOCRATICS ON PLATO'S THEORY OF FORMS

The activities of the pre-Socratics in western philosophy dates back to the 6th century in Greece. One will not be wrong to identify them as laying the foundation for philosophical scholarship. They have a unifying mission in their philosophical speculations. This basic denominator is the basic stuff of the universe or reality. In terms of what this basic element is, they fall into some schools of thought which has pointed out that uniqueness in philosophy. These basic stuff are water, fire, change, permanence etc. Among the pre-Socratics, three characters come to mind namely: Pythagoras, Heraclitus and Parmenides. This choice is based on the fact that their fundamental doctrines had a profound formative influence on the emergence and development of Plato's theory of Forms which happens to be the nucleus of this research.

2.2.1 PYTHAGORAS

A comprehensive approach to understand his doctrine is from the point of view of the following: Religion, Mathematics, science and philosophy.

From the religious standpoint, he was influenced by orphism, a religious movement that propounded the immortality of the soul, the divine nature of the soul and its spirituality. **Burnet, (1930)** has this to say about Pythagoreanism, it was a movement of reform in orphism and orphism was a movement of reform in the worship of Dionysus., He was on the side of mysticism, although his mysticism had an intellectual origin. He attributed to himself a semi-divine character and appears to have said ""here are men and gods, and beings like Pythagoras. **Cornford, (1965:201)** says that

> *in all the systems Pythagoras inspired, there is a tendency to be out worldly, putting all values in the unseen unity of God, and condemning the visible world as false and illusive, a turbid medium in which the rays of heavenly light are broken and obscured in mist and darkness.*

We can observe that he had a tremendous influence from orphism and an interesting aspect to this development was his capacity to transform this religious cult to a rational philosophy.

Describing Pythagoras, Dikaiarchos said in **(Russell, 1961)** that the soul is an immortal thing and that it is transformed into other kinds of living things, further, that whatever things that come into existence is born again in the revolution of a certain cycle, nothing being absolutely new and that all things that are born with life in them ought to be treated as kindred. "It is said that he preached to animals. He accorded equal status to men and women in his society and advocated common ownership of property and communal life. We can see that this is the basis of Plato's communism as typified by the *Republic*. Often, we talk of theory in various spheres of Plato's philosophy. This concept was originally an orphic word. **Cornford, (1965)** interpreted this concept as "passionate sympathetic

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contemplation." Pythagoras elevated this concept to an intellectual cognition and embodied it in mathematical knowledge. Mathematics we have noted was one of the methods through which Pythagoras expressed his philosophic acumen. This aspect of learning appeared to be certain, exact and applicable to the real world. It was obtained by rigorous thinking independent of observation. To this end, it was thought to supply an ideal from which every day empirical knowledge fell short (Russell 1961:34). The history of rationalism, a philosophical school, confirmed this on its insistence that thought was superior to sense and intuition to observation.

Maintaining further, the contemplative nature of Mathematics in Pythagoras philosophy, which he stated that is connected by means of an ethic, Burnet, (1930:108) summarized this position thus:

> *We are strangers in this world and the body is the tomb of the soul, and, yet we must not seek to escape by self-murder; for we are the chattels of God who is our herdsman, and without his command, we have no right to make our escape. In this life, there are three kinds of men, just as there are three sorts of people who come to the Olympic games. The lowest class is made up of those who come to buy and sell, the next above them are those who compete. Best of all however are those, who came simply to look. The greatest purification of all is, therefore disinterested science, and it is the man who devotes himself to that, the true philosopher, who has most effectually been released from "wheel of birth.*

What Burnet appears to be saying here is that Pythagoras gave primacy to reason because for him, reason provides the intellectual foundation for cognition in general and he accorded this function to philosophy. Plato was much influenced by this thesis which also

formed the bulk of the Cartesian philosophy in the modern period. One will be correct to say that mathematics is the central source of the belief in eternal and exact truth, as well as in a super-sensible intelligible world **(Russell, 1961:37).**

To emphasize the importance of mathematics in philosophical precision, Pythagoras posits that all things are numbers **(Russell, 1961:35).** He appears to be motivated in this postulation as a result of discovery he made in numbers and their relationship to music. This resulted in such concepts as harmonic mean and harmonic progressive. He was of the view that a systematic explanation of the universe cannot be completed without mathematics; hence there is order and harmony in the universe. Confirming this position Aristotle says,

> *The so called pythagoreans, the first to be absorbed in mathematics not only advanced this particular science, but having been brought up on it, they believed that its principles are the principles of all things .Now of these principles, numbers are naturally the first musical modes and relations too, they saw in terms of numbers, And all other matters; and numbers were for them the primary nature. In view of this, they took the element of numbers to be the element of all things, and the whole heaven to be harmony and number. They were adept to finding numbers and harmonies both in patterns of change and in structure of parts and they organised and unified the whole arrangements of the heavens to exhibit its harmony* (Aristotle, 1960:985).

From here we could see the role mathematics played and continues to play in the development of thought. There is no discipline that could be said to be innocent of mathematics. Added to this importance, is the influence of geometry upon philosophy. This branch of study as established and developed by the Greeks proceeds with axioms

which are said to be self-evident. Stressing the contribution made by Pythagoras in philosophy, religion and mathematics and above all Plato's philosophy, Russell maintains that he does not know of any other man who had been as influential as Pythagoras in the field of thought, because what appears as Platonism when analyzed thoroughly is found to be the essence of Pythagoreanism. The whole conception of an eternal world, revealed of the intellect but not to the senses is derived from him **(Russell, 1961:37).**

Without any doubt, we could see Plato speaking from Pythagoras except for some terminologies otherwise Plato's theory of Forms is within the theoretical framework of Pythagoreanism. The soul, its nature and immortality are products of Pythagoras. Pythagoreanism as an intellectual cult has a close affinity with Plato's academy which is also an intellectual cult committed to contemplation to produce philosophical cognition.

2.2.2 HERACLITUS

He is said to discover the theory of a changing world which many philosophers in Greece including Plato attempted to resolve. Some factors have been outlined as laying the philosophical foundation of this theory of change. The social and political crisis of his day occupied his mind in this postulation.

His philosophical thesis is that everything is in a constant state of flux and you cannot step twice into the same river. He argued against the notion that the existing political or social order will remain the same. For him, this is like acting like children reared with a

narrow outlook. Reality must continue to change to reflect the law of nature of birth and death decay and regeneration (Popper, 1962.)

One must follow what is common to all. Reason is common to all... All becomes one and one becomes all. The one which alone is wisdom wishes and does not wish to be called by the name of Zeus... It is the thunderbolt which steers all things (Popper 1962:16) The emphasis on change by Heraclitus formed the basis of Plato's theory of Forms especially as it concerns the physical world. It is chaotic, unstable and does not persist. Instability becomes a crucial element in the physical world. To this end, the world of Forms provides an escape for those with the philosophic disposition. In our own world, it shows that no human condition is permanent. There is a continuous search to attain the ideal which of course is the essence of Platonism.

The law of change for Plato forms part of a cosmic law- a law which is applicable to all created or generated things. All things in flux, all generated things are subject to decay (Popper, 1962:19) This position in our view is fundamental to social and political development. That no condition is permanent is a basic law of social development. It shows that capacity for man to improve his well-being in the society. In his effort to accomplish this, he encounters problems from other parties in the society. A clear example is the trial and subsequent execution of Socrates his mentor. It was an event that made him lose all political ambition. A society that does not pursue justice in its philosophic entirety is in danger of decay and disintegration. For Plato, this is not a real world and this inevitably prompted his theory of dualism- the physical and the spiritual

world. The objective lesson of Plato's theory of the state of flux is that our effort to achieve peace and stability in our political environment might be illusory because, while efforts are made to wards this exercise, both the peace process and those that are involved are continuously changing. So, it creates a kind of a vicious circle making a political equilibrium impossible. This is where a philosophic disposition is necessary in order for us to adopt a comprehensive approach.

Plato's analysis of social development has a fundamental application to his concept of unity in diversity. Most people especially politicians mention this concept without commitment. What it means is that, in plural societies like ours, we should make conscious efforts to promote tolerance, encourage even development to forestall societal crisis. This is the bane of our social harmony.

2.2.3 PARMENIDES

In a nutshell, Heraclitus state of flux theory can be described as a reaction against the Parmenidean theory of stability. **Khan (1969:700)** has maintained that in terms of a systematic and rigorous articulation of Being as exemplified in Metaphysics, Parmenides was the first to champion such a philosophical position. Throwing more light on this thesis Unah posited that in terms of a profound presentation of being Parmenides was the first. According to Unah, Parmenides posited that "nothing changes; that the changing mutable aspects of the world could not be real. Being is permanence. Only the permanent the real, exists" **(Unah, 1996:48, 2002, 2006).** Parmenides equates reality with permanence and argues the thesis that" What is" does not change. 'What is' in

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Parmenides terminology depicts *Being, Reality* or *substance.* In a metaphysical dimension, this substance represents the 'one' which is immutable, infinite, indivisible and changeless. The trust of his metaphysical speculation is that change is simply an illusion of the senses, that Being is one and unchanging. Nothing comes into Being and nothing is generated from Being. In reality, there is no change, whatever is, is and cannot become anything else.

Plato was much influenced by the state of flux theory of Heraclitus and theory of permanence by Parmenides. Plato accommodated these two philosophical positions in an integrated philosophy. The Heraclitean position of reality as being in a constant state of flux represents the physical world where everything is in motion. This motion is characterized by chaos, instability appearance and deception. This is the hallmark of human society. Reality is given various interpretations depending on our social and political interest. It depends on who is defining what. Objectivity is sacrificed on the altar of subjectivity and this was a serious source of concern to Plato. Today, our society is not free from this problem and that is why we are constantly projecting into the future for a better society.

On the other hand, the world of Forms represents the Metaphysics of Parmenides who described Reality as stable, unchanging, immutable. The basic feature of this world is permanence, perfection devoid of rancour. Wherever that is done in the works of art, architectural design is an imitation from this source. These things exist in their permanent form. This explains why our capacity to project into this world is inexhaustible. Anything

we think of in terms of creativity is there. All we need to do is to give ourselves a

rigorous philosophical training and the sky now becomes our limit, we can project from

one state of affairs to another. From here, we could see the tremendous influence

Heraclitus and Parmenides had on Plato's theory of Forms and his entire philosophical

postulations. Supporting this position **Gomperz (1969:2)** states, Divide the Becoming of

Heraclitus by the Being of Parmenides and you will obtain the ideas of Plato". Gomperz

confirmed that Herbart had compressed his view on the philosophic development of

Plato. This observation by Gomperz is quite correct. The reason for this is that Plato's

philosophical acumen in integrating the philosophies of Heraclitus and Parmenides into a

single metaphysical edifice is very noble. It shows his strength not only in philosophical

analysis but synthesis as well. It does not mean that there are no traces of other

philosophical works but these two personalities made a tremendous impact on Plato's

philosophy in general. We also observed that there is a relationship cutting across Plato's

philosophy with those of Pythagoras, Heraclitus and Parmenides which culminates into a

strong epistemological system.

2.3   EPISTEMOLOICAL ANALYSIS OF THE THEORY OF FORMS

Norman, (1962) tells us that in Plato's early *Dialogues*, one of the most significant

features of Socrates enquires is the attention which they gave to general definitions. He

pointed out that in some of the dialogues such as *Laches, Charmides, Euthyphro* and the

Hippias the major target of the discussions with Socrates is to arrive at the definition of

a familiar moral concept using dialectics. This dialectics which is a method of question

and answer to arrive at knowledge provided a stimulus to Plato's epistemology. This

position was confirmed by Aristotle when he emphasized that this attention on definition was an important Socratic influence in the shaping of Plato's theory of Forms **(Aristotle Metaphysics 987b1-7, 1078b17-31)**. This theory apart from pointing to the nature and object of knowledge, Socrates concern with definitions raised some epistemological questions which Plato addressed before he formulated and systematized his theory of Ideas. What are these epistemological questions as they arose from the Socratic definitions? Some of them are:

(i)   That virtue is knowledge

(ii)   The method of cross-examinations as the best approach of attaining knowledge. The content of this thesis that virtue is knowledge is very crucial because to be good, it is important to know what is good, to know what is good invariably, is to do what is good.

(iii)   The implication of this proposition is that most of our wrong doings emanate from ignorance. Some may argue that this position is wrong because most of our actions that are wrong are well known to us. Human beings know what is good and bad they maintain, Plato is of the view that ignorance is the cause of wrongdoing. For him, knowledge of the good resides in the world of Forms which is not accessible to everybody. So, what people regard as knowledge may not be knowledge after all.

(iv)   Plato's theory of knowledge therefore, is a further development of his master Socrates. His Epistemology was an attempt to wrestle knowledge from the hands of the Sophists who made desperate effort to relativize knowledge. One of the Sophists Gorgias, has argued that nothing exists, that even if it exists, it cannot be

known and if it is known, it cannot be communicated (Omeregbe, 1991). This thesis posed a big epistemological challenge to philosophers.

(v) Plato started a spirited defense by positing that knowledge is not relative but has an objective standard. It is not only objective, it is universal capable of been known and communicated. It is stable and certain. This accounts for its transmission from one epoch to another through the vehicle of thought and language. In this case, there is a correspondence between language and thought. In Plato's position, knowledge is a product of reason not sense perception. This has been a major gulf between rationalism and empiricism, two rival philosophical schools. He made a distinction between knowledge and opinion. A true philosopher is one who loves knowledge completely. On this issue, let us listen to **Friendlander (1969:106):** it is in the nature of love that it loves its objects completely, hence the philosopher loves wisdom completely and in this pursuit, he desires to behold the truth and to approach and apprehend beauty itself.

(vi) He explained this by an ontological schema- the three epistemological stages- knowledge, ignorance and in between opinion. This he observed, corresponds strictly to three ontological stages of being, not being and in between, the world of becoming. The concept of "becoming" is characterized here in a Parmenidean sense as both being and not being. For the philosopher, his mission is to gravitate to the realm of true being. A true philosopher looks beyond opinion in arriving at the truth. He is not a lover of opinion. This does no suggest that he does not respect opinions as expressed by others.

(vii)   In an attempt to impact positively on our values in society, conscious effort should be made to attain knowledge of the realm of truth. His reason for this is that this knowledge provides a foundation on the legislation of what is good, just and beautiful. Plato's observation which Friendlander is elaborating is that most of what we claim to know are in most cases in the province of opinion. Sometimes, analysis is not carried out before arriving at what is called knowledge. It is the function of epistemology therefore, to establish the basic framework of genuine and true knowledge. Those who propagate opinion (doxa) in the guise of knowledge Plato described as philodoxical, but those who contemplate things as they are in themselves, and as they exist ever permanent and immutable are called philosophical (*Republic* 1997:187).

This position has serious implication for epistemology whose objective is to establish the ground, nature, scope and validity of human knowledge on a given issue. Opinion is unstable and could be coloured with prejudice. It is not certain because as soon as it is faulted, it is bound to be thrown aside. This also applies to belief. Can we equate knowledge with belief? Assuming I believe X, does it imply that I know it.? Knowledge from this perspective transcends opinion, belief and judgment. In two of Plato's dialogues namely; *Meno and Theaetetus,* he stated categorically that, for us to attain a genuine knowledge, we should go beyond opinion. Going beyond opinion entails providing evidence to show why X should be the case instead of Y. We should avoid the fact that it is true because A has said so. We should not be persuaded to accept X as true because his view is from Y who is an authority. As a result of this problem, epistemology came to the

conclusion after considering many factors that for X to be knowledge it must assume the character of justified true belief. There are three factors in this theory namely: Truth, belief and justification. These three factors have become the components of knowledge.

Ayer, (1956:34) outlined three conditions that must qualify something as knowledge provided there is necessary and sufficient conditions; truth, sure and the right to be sure. This position is corroborated by **Chishlom, (1966:72)** who stated that for X to be true, one must believe it, if it is true and if he is justified. An overriding concept in this exercise is that such belief, truth and justification must be reasonable or acceptable. This takes us back to the issue of certainty and stability as criteria for knowledge. Acceptability or reasonableness could not be established without a strong evidence. The key word in regarding knowledge as justified true belief seems to be based on "justification" The question now is, how or when is knowledge said to be justified? Is it when we have solid and incontrovertible evidence? Do we say that X is justified because it is reasonable or that it has a general acceptability? Do we say that we are sure or that the evidence provided is conclusive and cannot be doubted?. These are serious epistemological questions. The answers to these questions may not be final but the questions themselves have renewed profound philosophical questions with a far- reaching interest depending on how one is looking at them.

Knowledge is being in an appropriate position to certify or give one's authority or warrant to the truth of what is said to be known **(Hamlyn, 1970:101).** We agree with this position because truth is neither a guesswork, a chance affair nor reliance on an invalid

reasoning. What this means is that knowledge is not a child's play, it must be a cerebral output based on cogent reasoning. It is not given to everybody. In the words of Plato, it is a product of a rigorous and disciplined mind. At this stage one is equipped for all kinds of things that will promote human welfare and well-being. This is where Plato linked knowledge to the world of Forms. According to him, genuine knowledge is from the world of Forms. That is where you get the true objects of knowledge. How did he arrive at this conclusion?

He propagated the doctrine of innate Ideas. The doctrine of Innatism stipulates that we are born with certain knowledge from the world of Forms. What happens is our capacity to remember what we used to know in the world of Forms. This is his famous theory of pre-existence. The concept of pre-existence suggests that the soul is immortal. It was existing in the world of Forms before it became imprisoned in the body. As a result of transmigration of the soul, it is born again where it comes in contact with a previous knowledge. Knowledge to Plato therefore, is reminiscence. This doctrine was popularized in one of his dialogues *Meno* **(Guthrie, 1956)**. Another way to put it based on the *Meno* is that the process of gaining knowledge in this life is a process of recollection of what the soul knows previously. This theory implies that knowledge is a priority in the sense that, its source is independent of the experience of this life. The concept of recollection is first introduced in the orphic and Pythagorean philosophy. Plato used this theory to show how Socrates led a slave to solve a problem. The problem we are meant to understand is to discover the length of the side of a square which will have twice the area of a square with sides two feet long. The ignorant slave boy had no previous instruction in geometry

but was able to identify some indubitable geometrical propositions. This was arrived at through questions and answers. This Plato confirms is the doctrine of innate ideas which is the ability of the soul to recollect the knowledge of what it knows before it was born into the world. The issue of recollection for point of emphasis is likened to the concept of memory. The question here is, if the slave boy is able to remember what he knew previously, what happens to remembering something. Is it not possible that the slave boy knew the answer accidentally? If he was able to identify the geometrical problem, can we say that he knows? If we accept knowledge as justified true belief, are we convinced that the slave boy knows exactly how he arrived at the solution of the geometrical problem? These questions might sound unreasonable but their answers might raise new philosophical questions in the metaphysics of Plato.

2.4 THE METAPHYSICS OF PLATO'S THEORY OF FORMS

There is no better way to understand Plato's theory of Forms except through his Metaphysics. His theory of Forms says **Ozumba, (2001:68)** is not limited to his theory of knowledge, It is penetrating and pervasive. It is the pillar of all his philosophical ideas. This position is quite in order because there is a high degree of relationship between his epistemology, ethics and Metaphysics whose goal is geared towards that effort to liberate man from the shackles of deceptive appearance. Knowledge of reality which ultimately is the basis of man's intellectual and social salvation can only be derived from the world of Forms. How did he come to this proposition? There are two worlds in Plato's Metaphysics. The physical world characterized by appearance, opinion, instability and chaos. In a nutshell, a world of flux whose basic feature is change. This is the Heraclitean

doctrine of state of flux. In this world, which is our own world, reality is in constant motion with the result that change is the order of the day. Our day to day activities is in a constant frame of change. For Plato, stability in all its ramification is an illusion. What you see or do today can be jettisoned tomorrow. This is because cognition is controlled by the senses which is coloured by assumptions, presuppositions and prejudices. There is a limit to what we can grasp as certain knowledge.

The other world, the Forms or Ideas, he gives primacy because it is free from appearances and deception. It is eternal, immutable, unchanging, stable and knowable to the mind alone which means, it has independent existence. It is a world where all human endeavours draw inspiration from. Among these are artists of all persuasions, architectural designers, engineers and so on and so forth. This is a product of imagination. What is meant here is that Reality exists in its perfect form and all we do is to copy or imitate the original. Our activities here go beyond what is given to us in experience and how else can we describe Metaphysics other than this. What is implied here is that our ability to create a conducive environment for entities to manifest themselves is the function of Metaphysics. This is why the theory of Ideas as postulated by Plato has the capacity to strategize our developmental efforts in all sectors of our lives. The interesting thing is that it is not meant for anybody but those who have received sufficient training intellectually through a rigorous mental attitude of the mind. It is not for misfits or miscreants but those who have been found worthy through academic pursuits and excellence. For instance, at this level, we are not talking about justice but the essence of justice, we are not stressing beauty and courage but their essences. This means

that excellent disposition should be our guiding philosophy in terms of policy formulation and implementation. The distortions in our policy formulation are traceable to our inability to make a metaphysical analysis based on the Forms. Some of the policy makers are deficient in terms of that philosophic disposition which will give a solid foundation for such policies. The objects of true knowledge as we have said somewhere in this research are the essences of things, the ideal things or the perfect nature of things. In all that we do to promote our peoples well-being. Let us be guided by the essences or the Ideal of things. This guiding philosophy is a basic foundation in policy analysis both in education, health care; infrastructural development and all there is in development.

Some schools of thought have maintained that bringing the ideal or its spirit into a concrete affair is an exercise in futility. This is not only fatalistic but a destruction of that philosophical temper otherwise referred to as phenomenology. As the name implies, it tries to focus on possibilities. All options should be given the opportunity to manifest themselves. It is when such options are put into use and they fail that we can write them off. It is discovered that we write off some ideas before they are put into practice, this is not good enough. The reason for such opinion is that issues of ideal or essences are beyond human action. On this position **Immanuel Kant (1962)** maintained that man can understand reality through phenomena, that is, things as they appear to us. Human language in his view, informed by the categories of our understanding can only describe the phenomenal world. Man, he maintained cannot know noumenal that is, things in themselves. Metaphysical beings dwell in the noumenal world. Since man cannot know noumenal, it follows logically that he cannot have knowledge of metaphysical beings.

The reason for his position is that metaphysical beings are beyond the objects of human knowledge. His conclusion is that any attempt to use human language to describe an issue or event outside the linguistic realm would lead to confusion and ambiguity.

Kant's position appears to be a rejection of the world of Forms which Plato is talking about. His reason is that anything outside human experience cannot be described by language. We can only describe the phenomenal word. But most importantly, he admitted that the noumenal world which is things in themselves is real but we lack the capacity to describe them. It is philosophically correct that Metaphysical entities like the world of Forms cannot be described by the senses. This accounts for Plato's recommendation that we can only attain the knowledge of the Forms through "dialectical reasoning "which is none other than Metaphysics. It investigates the foundation of issues and events. It is the core of philosophy because it asks the "why" question. The why question has been ingrained in human nature and this makes it possible to look beyond our immediate experience with a view to proffering solutions to human problems. But for this action to be sustained to reflect a true philosophic disposition, we need to lay a solid foundation for Metaphysics to rid it of some misconceptions. On this view, **Heidegger (1962:5)** observed that the problem of Metaphysics is the problem of a fundamental Ontology. By this concept, he meant the ontological analytic of man's finite essence which should prepare the foundation for Metaphysics "which belongs to human nature" **(cf Unah, 1996:86-87)**. His conclusion is that Kant's critique of pure Reason as a penetrating Metaphysical masterpiece is a preliminary stage in the laying of the foundation of Metaphysics.

Our understanding of Heidegger's fundamental Ontology popularized by Jim Unah is an attempt to demolish traditional ontology whose goal was a relegation of Being which happens to be the bane of western philosophical scholarship. His goal in this demolition was accomplished when he established the fact that the problem of metaphysics is the problem of fundamental ontology. For Heidegger, ontology makes a lot of sense through phenomenology. What he means by this, is that ontology is the study of Being while phenomenology is the method of letting Being be seem in its own true light **(cf Unah, 1997:8)**. What this method amounts to is that in the analysis of Being we should be objective by not allowing assumptions and prejudices colour our task. If that phenomenological temper prevails, we should be able to attain amazing results beyond our imaginations.

A close examination of Plato's world of Forms appears to be in the realm of beyondness of Being which is in the purview of traditional ontology. The reason for our observation is that the essence of things which Plato refers to as Forms or Ideas cannot be known through sense perception but only through dialectical reasoning possessed by philosophers. Non philosophers therefore always attain opinion not true knowledge because of their inability to go beyond the world of Forms. This thesis on close analysis could be given various interpretations. If we agree that only philosophers are capable of attaining genuine knowledge devoid of opinion, who then are these philosophers? We have observed in this research that at the time Plato made this statement philosophy has not suffered an eruption. Now that you find various branches of knowledge because of

the need for specialization, can we still sustain this position? For this research, such position is not tenable because it will amount to the old metaphysical temper exemplified in the following maxims: Christ is the only way, Those who do not follow Christ will go to Hell. You find these examples in Christian Theology. Among the Muslims, you hear that Islam is supreme religion and Mohamed the messenger of Allah. If we hold these positions ideologically as they are presented, they will only lead to conflicts and war in human societies. We think it should not be, there are many methods of arriving at a solution of a given problem. One way should not claim dominance over the other. This is where some critics of Plato got it wrong. In an attempt to criticize the theory they went ahead to create other problems with some complicated nature. We think that any theory men propound reflect the prevailing circumstances at that time. Plato was troubled by the moral and political decadence in Athens which appear to glorify injustice in place of justice, bad in place of goodness. For us as far as this research is concerned, some of these theories were ways of escaping from the crisis of the moment. We should remember that this theory has an origin in orphism and by extension Pythagoreanism. What do we mean by all these?

The Orphic cum Pythagorean influence on Plato's theory of Forms is manifested in the nature of the soul. The soul is something divine in man, it is immortal, immaterial or spiritual. Its union with the body is purely accidental **(Omoregbe 1991:43)**. Plato's theory of the soul gave rise to the theory of pre-existence of the soul before it came into the world. It existed in the world of Forms where it knew all that there is in that world. Knowledge for Plato then, becomes reminiscence or recollection. The soul has the

capacity as a flash back to remember what it used to know, before it is imprisoned in the body. As a result of this imprisonment, it cannot get freedom until at death where it will be separated from the body. On full achievement of liberation through a series of re-incarnations it will go back to the world of Forms. Plato outlined a tripartite nature of the soul namely; the rational, spirited and the appetitive **(Omoregbe, 1991, Ozumba, 2001).**

The rational part is the highest part of the soul. It is indestructible, immortal and controls man. It differentiates man from animals. Its function is guidance and to bring other parts under control. The spirited part (courageous part) corresponds to man's higher emotions while the appetitive part corresponds to man's lower emotions or sensual desires. Plato gave primacy to the rational part because of its capacity for contemplation. It is meant to control the other parts in order to bring order and harmony. This is like the division of labour because if each performs its role within the whole higher output will be the result. In giving primacy to the rational aspect, that is, reason it does not mean that the other should be neglected in our process of cognition. What is meant is that, we should not allow emotions both higher and lower to dominate our pattern of thought. This has become a natural way of assessing the truth of a given issue. This will be a bold attempt to sustain order and stability in our moral decisions.

2.5   THE MORAL DIMENSION

Our argument here is that, Plato's moral theory is derivable from his epistemology and Metaphysics. The reason for this argument is based on an early proposition that the theory of Forms can be applied to all issues. Plato has argued that knowledge is objective,

universal and certain and that it is only genuine knowledge from the world of Forms that can free us from the hazards of deceptive appearances.

The knowledge Plato is emphasizing here is the knowledge of the "good". The good is a paradigm of the Ideal. It is comparable to the sun which brings out the brightest feature of what we expect in trying to describe goodness. In the *Republic* he confirmed that the attainment of the good is the end of intellectual progress. What this means is that, at this stage, no other quality is being expected. The good is an embodiment of perfection. All that we can aspire to and actualize is within the framework of goodness. A philosopher who is able to achieve this state through mental abstraction cannot do something wrong. This is where he agreed with Socrates his mentor that, virtue is knowledge but, ignorance the root of moral evil. Virtue is good at all circumstances. This means that virtue is the fulfillment of function. It now becomes a tool with which one can function. For function to come out as virtue it must possess goodness.

On a reflection, if we agree that ignorance is the result of wrong doing, it then means that we really do not possess knowledge. And if we do not possess knowledge to guide us in taking good decisions then, our knowledge is questionable. This will equally mean that we are groping in the dark. For this reason then, there is the need to evaluate what we call knowledge. This is where Plato's epistemology comes into play. He made a distinction between opinion and knowledge. Opinion (Doxa) is unstable, uncertain and in constant motion. Anybody can express opinion but not every person has knowledge. Knowledge epistemologically implies "Justified true belief". When we talk of knowledge, it means that all assumptions, Idols in the words of Bacon, presuppositions and prejudices have been set aside. In Husserlian phenomenology, we must have put in brackets all these

factors and then we apprehend reality in its purest form. This is the highest stage of Idealism. This in our view, is not for the simple minds. It is those that have attained a high cerebral disposition through a rigorous mental and disciplined intellectual production. This may sound elitist but, the actual process of thinking is no longer fashionable in our society. Many of us are not given to thinking. On this position **Anikpo (1986)** states, 'the most difficult exercise in life is thinking. Many people have given up thinking. Most of those who still do, cannot do it coherently"

We agree with Mark Anikpo because putting our brains to test has become a major challenge in contemporary society. This accounts for falling standard in virtually all sectors of our economy. Productivity is lower even with the emergence of high technological advancement. Take for instance the emergence of computer in the banking industry; customers go through stress in service delivery because of system breakdown. Sometimes, defective information are generated that customers lose money through defaults. In a society like ours, people do not know their rights and do not have time to examine these records and the stress could be unimaginable. This brings to bear our capacity to put our brain into thinking for a high intellectual out put. If possessing genuine knowledge from the world of Forms is a necessary condition to do things that are good and just, it means that what we have as knowledge is grossly inadequate to cope with the reality of human existence. It equally means that what we accept as good is not good enough in that comprehensive Platonic conception. The concept of good cannot be qualified. It is an end in itself not a means to an end. It shows that nothing can be added or removed from it. Unfortunately, we tend to have an average understanding of good. From a distance, sometimes, we can conclude that X is good without exhausting all

characteristics of what good stands for. Plato's morality is hinged on the fact that happiness is the end of morality. This implies that our actions are geared towards the fulfillment of human happiness. To this end, his morality is teleological. For us to achieve happiness, we must practice virtue.

Virtue in the Platonic sense is synonymous with knowledge or wisdom. You can possess knowledge but wisdom comes about when knowledge is used in peculiar fashion to resolve a problem. That is why we talk of Solomon's wisdom. To this end, one must know what is good and pursue the same. It is here that he draws the conclusion which he appropriated from Socrates that, ignorance is the cause of wrongdoings. He was able to establish that no man does evil knowingly. This sounds incredible. If we say that those who do wrong actions do so unwittingly or unknowingly then, it may be wrong to punish wrongdoers. But it is expected that wrongdoing should be corrected in order to deter people from making such mistakes. If wrong doing is not checked, society may suffer a great deal of disorder and confusion. It appears to us too technical to understand Plato's position in this regard. This makes philosophic disposition a necessary ingredient for personality development. The knowledge of the good will enable us to appreciate the concept of beauty, temperance, justice and courage. These qualities are compulsory for leadership because they are products of the soul.

However, we have argued in this research concerning Plato's psychology on the immortality of the soul. It originates from the world of Forms. In terms of human capability for reason, the soul was divided into three parts. Thus, this tripartite division of the soul shows the relevance or importance of the part to function in the whole. There

will be a dislocation if this pattern is truncated. The three parts are; the rational, the spirited and the appetitive. The rational part exhibits wisdom, the spirited part exhibits courage while the appetitive part exhibits temperance **(Ozumba, 2001:71)**. Each of these parts and the virtue they exhibit work in harmony to produce justice which is regarded as the master virtue. The production of justice is the outcome of a high level of co-operation between the various parts. This in turn, is as a result of each part doing what it knows how to do best. If this position is achieved, it is likely to guarantee peace and stability in the society. This confirms the thesis that social justice, a product of Plato's theory of forms, provides a philosophical foundation for social and political stability. It is not enough to profess justice as a hallmark of peace and social stability but, we have to imbibe Plato's analysis of the Forms as a stimulus to the enthronement of social and political stability which will in turn promote peace and progress. What is social Justice? What social conditions led to the postulation of the concept of social justice? Will social justice promote socio-political stability?

2.6   SUMMARY

Plato's theory of Forms is the anchor of his metaphysics .Metaphysics is a core branch of philosophy which deals with the beyondness of Being. Plato's conception of metaphysics is grounded on the idea. The analysis of the idea is centered on the forms because all ideal things are real while non -ideal things are shadows of reality. The theory of Forms as presented by Plato compartmentalized the world into two; the physical and the spiritual world. The physical world represents fluctuations, appearance and instability. On the other hand, the world of Forms is the intelligible world, the ontological world the

essences of things and the perfect world. Plato's conception of this dualism was meant to accommodate the state of flux theory of Heraclitus and the theory of permanence of Parmenides. For Heraclitus, reality is in a constant state of flux while for Parmenides, Being is non –being is not .According to him, nothing comes out of being and nothing goes into being .What is, is and what is not cannot be. Nature is a unity. The conclusion of Parmenides is that Being the "One" is and becoming is an illusion of the senses. By the analysis of the world of becoming, Plato accepted the state of flux theory of Heraclitus. The theory of permanence of Parmenides represents the world of Forms The world of Forms is the basis of social and political practice. It provided an avenue for good leadership, education moral development and creativity. It also provides an avenue for a rigorous and critical mental production. It is in this connection that Plato wanted those in leadership to become philosophers while those aspiring for leadership should acquire the discipline and the philosophical outlook.

CHAPTER THREE

THE PHILOSOPHICAL UNDERSTANDING OF SOCIAL JUSTICE

3.0   INTRODUCTION

The concept of the predicate 'just' as in justice in Greek philosophical discourse appears

to originate from one of the pre-Socratics-Anaximander. Ophir (1991) citing

Vernant(1982) has shown how the cosmological conception of an ordered universe in

which 'justice' exhibited the relation between all existing things, is a projection of a

social order unto the universe as a whole. Anaximander did not only talk about justice, he

also talked about injustice. According to him there must be an original element, a primary

stuff of which all things are made. The primary element of all things cannot be any of the

things we know because all the elements we know are in conflict with each other and if

any of them were the original stuff it would simply conquer and submerge the others. The

primary element must therefore be neutral, different from all the elements we know, it

must also be infinite, eternal and indeterminate **(cf Omeregbe, 1991; 4, Ophir, 1991:46).**

The conflict between the different elements was interpreted by Anaximander as an

example of injustice in nature since by means of this conflict one element invaded the

domain of another element. But, he observed that there is a cosmic law of justice which

establishes order and makes everything go back into that from which it came. ;Into that

from which things take their rise they pass away once more, as ordained, for they make

reparation and satisfaction to one another for their injustice according to the ordering of

time **(cf Omeregbe,199:15).**

Parmenides, the exponent of the philosophical theory of permanence theorized about justice as a divine power, an agent of punishment and revenge which holds the interchangeable keys to the great folding doors in the gates of the path of Night and day. Once those gates are opened, a wide gaping space is revealed and then crossed on the way towards Being and Truth. On the other hand, Heraclitus the proponent of the state of flux theory compares justice to the city wall, where people are expected to fight for the law as if they were fighting to protect the wall **(Ophir 1991:46).**

In the period of the Pre-Socratics under reference, justice was not a subject of discourse as it relates with man and society. Although the issue of justice was not brought down to earth there was an attempt to link it to a certain arrangement of space that limits man's access to truth. What we are trying to draw attention to here is that certain obstacles rendered justice inaccessible.

The growth of democracy which brought about freedom and individualism led to the demand for answers to human problems and society. Philosophy now turned attention to the problems of man and society. Such problems as what is knowledge, justice, virtue, morality goodness pre-occupied the philosophical landscape. A philosophical school which championed this propagation was the sophists. They were the first exponents of this new intellectual trend about man and his society. As Cicero put it, the Sophists brought philosophy down from heaven to the dwellings of men. Originally, the term meant those who are wise but later employ specious argument or reasoning or who lack a

sense of social responsibility and are unscrupulous in making the worse appear the better cause (**Craig and Graham et al 2006**).

The sophists were a group of teachers and philosophers who went from one city to another teaching and instructing people on how to be successful in politics using rhetorics and grammar for a fee (**Omoregbe, 2002:25**). This made them to adopt a skeptical outlook. They were very critical questioning existing customs, religion and morality. They brought morality, customs and even knowledge to the province of relativism. The logical conclusion of their position is that it is impossible to attain certain knowledge.

Protagoras (481BC) is famous for his dictum that man is the measure of all things, of those that are that they are, and of those that are not that they are not (**Omoregbe, 2002:27**). This brings clearly the doctrines of the sophists to relativism. Man is at the centre of deciding what is true and what is not true. Goodness, truth, justice, beauty, virtue and morality are relative to the needs and interests of man himself. The implication of this is that there can be only particular morals, truths and goodness valid for a given place and time and men. For example, ancient Sparta allowed and even encouraged adultery among their men and women folk just to strengthen the military. The Athenians also isolated their women and even denied them a normal social life. The question now is, which of these practices are right? From the Sophists position, neither is right in any absolute sense, for there are no absolute canons of right and wrong eternally decreed in the heavens to fit all cases and circumstances. Man alone determines what is evil and good.

The Sophists controversy deepened with the analysis of justice by Thrasymachus in Plato's *Republic*. According to him law and justice are merely the expression of the will and the interests of the stronger and most powerful in the society of men. The wise man therefore, is perfectly an unjust man who is above the law and is concerned only with the maximization of his own interest and happiness or desires (The *Republic* 1997:21).

Every form of government, he maintains makes laws with a view to its own interest and by doing that are they not making it very clear that what is the ruler's interest is what is just for the ruled? Whoever breaks the law gets a punishment as being unjust. The government is the stronger and its interest makes its actions just or unjust. Everywhere, justice is the same thing, the interest of the stronger **(The *Republic*, 1997:22).**

He continued that the most unjust man is the one who has the power to keep pocketing things on the greatest scale. The best way to see all these is by turning our eyes on the highest and most complete form of injustice, the one which makes the man who does the wrong most happy and which makes the others who are wrong and who would not themselves do any such wrong most unhappy. And, so, injustice is stronger, freer and a greater thing than justice **(*The Republic*, 1997:26-27).**

One of the fundamental contributions of the Sophists is that of bringing the human problems of society, laws, customs, morality and politics into the realm of philosophy. At the same time, they became unpopular because their teaching was aimed at making the youths successful, the consequences of such success is not put into consideration. Their doctrines especially as they relate to truth, goodness, justice were determined by the

interest of the powerful and stronger. It then means that neither religion, morality, law nor the society can last. The philosophical implication is a high blown immorality and of course anarchy. If these factors were not checked society and even man stands a chance of extinction. This prompted Socrates and by extension Plato to launch a new philosophic movement whose objective was to establish the fact that there is absolute standards of justice, goodness, truth, morality and virtue. It means that these concepts are not only objective in human society but that they are universal. It means that there are certain actions that stand condemned irrespective of the part of the world where they are perpetuated. For example, killing or stealing has no moral justification in any decent society except killing in self-defense or in war. The society that Plato was trying to reconstruct was a corrupt and decaying society. He needed a lot of courage to bring his philosophical postulation of justice to make a meaningful impact. Chapters one and two of the *Republic* the greatest of his dialogues, were committed to the investigation and analysis of justice. In this analysis, the crucial question becomes what is justice, what is the nature, scope and characteristics of justice? Does justice mean freedom or human rights?

3.1 DEFINITION OF SOCIAL JUSTICE

When we talk about justice, the first thing that comes to mind is a just social order, because this is where justice can make sense. In an unjust social and political order justice is likely to be misplaced and this might create tension resulting in political crisis. The emergence of justice as a philosophical theme in Greece in Plato's time is as a result of growing tension between political reality and what we think politics ought to be. Plato

was disturbed with the growing perversion of justice especially with the trial and execution of Socrates who was seen as the wisest man of his days. He observed that the trouble in Athens was becoming deep as it affects property, well-being of life and the human condition. He was concerned with that "humaness' in man which is at stake. He felt that a philosophical transformation is necessary not only for the society but also for man. The existing political order was unjust and it favoured what Thrasymachus called justice as the interest of the stronger.

Just and justice were mentioned in earlier *Dialogues* of Plato that is, (*Hippias Minor* 375d-376b; *Gorgias* 483a-484C). None of these Dialogues contains an explicit question, what is justice. From here we could conclude that the question of what justice is constitutes a Platonic philosophical problem. In book one of the Republic, justice is defined as keeping ones promise or redemption of a debt.(*Republic* Book 1 P.16). These definitions were criticised on the ground that some circumstances could make them inappropriate. Take for instance, somebody gave you a knife to keep but comes back to take it when his mental disposition is questionable, would you return the knife knowing what he is likely to do with it? On the other hand, assuming somebody gives you some money to keep but by the time he comes back for the money he is already drunk, would you return the money to him in that mental state? It is obvious from these questions that to arrive at an acceptable definition of justice is problematic.

For Polemarchus, the son of Cephalus, one of Socrates interculators, justice is to help one's friends and harm one's enemies. His definition appears to rely on the Homeric

mentality. Homeric heroes came to the rescue of their friends and retaliated against their enemies in a political space where rulers or kingship determine the limits of ones action, defined a transgression and called for punishment **(Havelock, 1978; 189-192, Bloom, 1968:316-325).**

For Herodotus, justice means fairness in judgment. The retributive dimension of justice is clearly expressed when it is divine not human. For the gods, justice means balancing offences and punishment, while the agents of suffering or reward may be different human entities, individuals, families, cities or nations **(Ophir, 1991:53).**

In point of fact neither human nor divine justice was of much concern to Herodotus, who described the rise and fall of the agents involved in exercising justice and injustice as an aspect of precarious human happiness. Justice whether present or absent is a rather marginal characteristic of human affairs, and is an unpredictable uncontrollable feature of divine intervention in the world of man **(Immerwahr, 1966:21ff., 237).** Herodotus maintained that justice still lies more in heaven than on earth; it has not interacted with reason, and its political context has not been fully appreciated. Justice is still confined to an act or to an individual by virtue of its action. It is irrelevant to intelligence, for many cunning and wise men appear to be unjust; and it may be a factor within a political system that is supposed to determine its nature. In an attempt to examine the concept of justice, we have observed some characteristics, scope and validity of justice. These are made clear by such words as fairness in judgment and retribution. We also saw Plato's

effort in preserving the humaness in justice. This compels us to examine the social and legal aspects of justice. What is the relationship of social justice to justice in general?

Social justice in the opinion of John Rawls, refers to the distribution of benefits and burdens on a society, as it results from the major social institutions, property system, and public organisation. It deals with such matters as the regulation of wages and where they exist profits, the protection of persons' rights through the legal system, the allocation of housing, medicine, and welfare benefits **(Rawls, 1972, Miller, 1976:22)**. Legal justice concerns the punishment of wrongdoing and the compensation of injury through the creation and enforcement of a public set of rules (the law). Two types of issues are mainly dealt with. First, it stipulates the conditions under which punishment may be inflicted, adjust the scale of punishment to fit the nature of different crimes, and in the sphere of civil law, regulates the amount of restitution which must be made for injuries. Secondly, it lays down procedures for applying the law- the principles of fair trial and the right of appeal **(Miller, 1976:22)**.

We have observed that although both social and legal justice are products of justice, certain criteria are applicable to each of them. It is equally worthy of note to observe that in analyzing the two concepts, certain moral input will be common to both. What we are trying to point out here is that legal justice will serve as a tool of realizing the concept of social justice. To this end, this research might be expected to focus on justice in general as Plato investigated in the *Republic*. The reason is for a more coherent analysis and the

avoidance of much technical details. To this extent, effort will be made to examine and evaluate the angles of emphasis from the point of view of Thrasymarchus and Socrates.

In Plato's *Republic,* especially, books one and two, Thrasymarchus, a strong member of the sophists school had maintained that justice is the expression of the will of the strongest men in the society. He strongly was of the view that injustice appears to have an upper hand in place of justice. His thesis is comprehended in a philosophical dictum "might is right." Plato's own conception of justice is stressed, thus "every one doing his duty without interference". Now, there is a disagreement between Socrates and Thrasymarchus. Thrasymarchus appears to be positive on what justice is in the context of Greek political and social experience. His position is a reflection of the moral bankruptcy that characterized democratic Athens. His position should not be seen as trivial or empty verbiage but a close observation of official corruption within a society that recognized deceit in place of truth, propaganda in place of education, terrorism in place of human rights. In modern political landscape the view that "might is right" has taken the centre stage. Countries now wake up to annex their neighbours because they have the political will and resources to carry out such acts. Some even go and overthrow a sitting government. The experience of Iraq in annexing Kuwait as its 19th province which led to the outbreak of the Gulf war in 1991 between United States and Iraq is a clear demonstration of this phenomenon. To confirm its superiority over Iraq, the United States waged another war against Iraq on the simple accusation that the Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction. Evidence supporting such claim has been flawed. Thrasymarchus appears to have an edge. If we take into consideration what is happening in our political

environment both national and international, it appears that we close our eyes to it and allow those who champion democracy and human rights to hold us to ransom.

Socrates was analyzing justice from an ideal point of view. According to him, justice is giving everyone his due. A realization of this dimension is possible in a well-organized, tranquil, political and social order. It may not be realizable where a few tyrants hijack the political process and unleash terror on their fellow human beings in the name of being the policeman of the world, defenders of democracy and human rights. Form this point of view, a re-definition of social justice will make sense and relieve it of such issues of intellectual abuse and cover-up. Such cover-up obstructs the real intention of what social justice stands for. On this perspective let us listen to **Barker (1925:176-177),**

> *Social justice thus may be defined as the principle of a society, consisting of different types of men... who have combined under the impulse of their need for one another, and by their combination in one society and their concentration on their separate functions, have made a whole which is perfect because it is the product and the image of the whole of the human mind.*

If Barker is well understood in the Platonic conception of justice, as allowing every man put his best in a just society to promote not only productivity, but also the course of man's spiritual and social well-being then, cognizance must be given to men who have acquired a philosophic disposition through mental and intellectual excellence. We have argued somewhere in this research that such skills are scattered in various disciplines as a result of the eruption suffered by philosophy. What we are saying in effect is that such skills have been acquired by some scholars who have attained through rigorous education the spiritual power and discipline of philosophy **(Unah, 2002:26).** From this point, these

skills are not limited to those with philosophical training but also, all those who have through research in mental excellence have contributed to the development of society no matter the epoch. Emphasis here is on specialization through separation of functions. If we put into use our different skills, there will be harmony and by extension peace in the society. Another definition of social justice was given by **Ozumba (2001:64)** where he looked at it from a utilitarian perspective. Utilitarianism as an ethical theory looked at social juice as providing the greatest happiness to the greatest number. Social justice in this context, seeks directly the welfare of everybody. A just man therefore, is one who in all circumstances and situations acts in matters of distribution of burden to accord others their moral rights.

Ozumba's position is premised on the fact that people know what is in their best interest. Is it possible for people to act in their best interest without some ulterior motive? Experience has shown that most people act from the point of view of self-interest. This has found expression in practical politics. The first book of the *Republic* has been concerned mainly with a refutation of the Nietzschean theory upheld by Thrasymarchus that, natural justice is merely the right of the stronger to grasp what he can. This prompted Glaucon and Adeimantus the younger brothers of Plato, to take Socrates to task in the opening paragraph of the second book of *The Republic* to defend the thesis that justice is better than injustice.

They observed and, correctly too, that unjust men wax stronger and had all the goodies in society and that evil tends to have an upper hand. The reason for this is that what we call

injustice is easily carried out than justice because, those who control power see it as a means to an end. And for this reason, it appears to be the foundation of a decaying political and social order. Those who come out for a radical reformation either pay through their lives or get kicked out of the system or better still in a common phrase, "If you cannot beat them, then join them," This is the foundation of corruption and its consolidation. As Edmund Burke observed, "The only thing necessary for evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing **(Ruch 1974: 19).**

The question is, who are the good men? Are they not part of the society?. Granted that there are those we call the good men, are they not in minority? Sometimes, detached from the crisis of the society. Overwhelmed by the triumph of evil in their societies, they sometimes become strong critics and as a result, are subjected to harassment and intimidated to the extent that they resign themselves to fate. What is to be done? This is where Plato stretched his philosophical horizon to more intriguing issues of justice.

3.2 JUSTICE AS MORALITY

We have examined justice from the point of view of the sophists represented by Thrasymarchus, that justice is the interest of the stronger over the weak. We observed that there are some merits in this position as experienced in our various societies both developed and developing. Injustice appears to be the order of our political and social order. It equally shows the origin and nature of justice including its scope. Plato has argued that justice is not a means to an end but an end in itself, it is desirable in itself, it is an act of righteousness.

On this vein, **More (1970:44) and Unah (2002a)** state as follows:

> *But as the quality of justice, if it can be defined by any single term, it is by the word measure- the outcome of that last, undiscovered force within a man, which acts as a check and stay upon the restless, imperious, tumultuous impulses and desires, and emotions ever swelling out of the dark background of life, a force which, itself unseen, brings order out of disorder, proportions out of excess, balances out of discord, peace out of agony, out of the unmeasured measure.*

From here we could see justice as the inner law of measure, balance and health. It is a force that regulates human actions in a stable social order. It is the disposition which makes a man refrain from an act recommended by desire or by his apparent interest through obedience to a belief that he ought not to perform it **(Foster, 1942:37)**. The concept of justice and injustice as they relate to morality are qualities displayed in the exercise of human actions. For example, a man is said to be a just judge when he is impartial in a matter brought before him. An unjust judge is one who not only perverts justice but also twists a case brought before him to favour a particular party. For that quality of fairness to be exhibited, one must possess that philosophic disposition which will elicit that force of justice in man to be fair to all parties. At this stage, one can be proud to say I have done justice to this case.

Plato's doctrine of justice therefore, is a philosophical compendium of the results of what Greek thought had come to be not only in pre-Socratic epoch but also became the foundation of Aristotle's systematic ethics as expressed through the law of the golden mean. Plato's contribution here confirms that notion that, to be in a position to make good laws, one who is a product of disorder is likely to make a meaningful contribution

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in the process of legislation. The reason for this is attested from his experience in the crisis that rocked the political ship of the Athenian society. There seems to be a paradox here for an individual to accomplish the task of a system that is sustainable within the confines of a moral order. **Unah, (2002b:23-24),** made this clear when he stated, that he who must introduce order must himself be a product of disorder, he who must guarantee stability must himself emerge from instability, he who must give law must himself be familiar with lawlessness, and he who must give security must know insecurity.

This paradox, as Unah observed is the root cause of our intractable conflict at all times. The reason for this, is that most of those who propagate peace, order and good governance have not witnessed any experience to prepare them for this task. In terms of recommendation, most of the issues to be used are either an average understanding or in some cases vague. This happens because without this foundation stated above, concrete and holistic solution might not be in sight. Our environment unfortunately, has witnessed recycling of leaders whose tract records are questionable in proffering solutions to our social problems. These leaders have been found wanting in terms of moral standards to keep a society free from unjust actions. This is the reality of our political and social conditions and seriously calls for a reversal. Without this reversal, there is no moral law and the notions of right and wrong, justice and injustice are but empty names. We live under clouds of confusion and ignorance beyond which rides no sun **(More, 1970:45).**

For Plato, justice belongs to that highest class of goods, which are desirable to possess for their consequences and still more for themselves like seeing, hearing, wisdom, health

and whatever else is virtually good in its own nature rather than in appearance. Justice is a light that illuminates our thought, actions and decisions.

The result of Plato's position is seen in various transactions between individuals, groups and states. In every transaction, we expect a level of fairness, equity, transparency, accountability and equality. Justice becomes the object and standard of law, a fixed and abiding disposition to give every man his due **(Ndubuisi, 2005:44).**

This aspect of justice exposes to a tremendous extent the moral integrity of parties in the exercise of justice. In our day to day activities, people have cried out for being denied of justice which shows a high level of injustice and also a high level of falling moral standard. What this means is that, the higher our level of moral standard, the higher we dispense a high sense of justice. Morality in this case, becomes the foundation of justice and it's sustenance. Unfortunately, our societies have suffered from high incidence of low moral standard which also have affected the level of justice. It is for this reason that, justice has been brutalized, canibalized, vulgarized and banalized and this has affected the human psyche. It becomes fashionable to do injustice than justice. The position of this research is that it is still profitable to practice justice because it has a long-term benefit. Injustice is temporal, mutable in space and time. Justice is eternal and highly rewarding. The problem is our inability to project beyond justice in the physical realm. To analyze this scenario, Plato, following the Pythagoreans, postulated the immortality of the soul. Justice for him resides in the soul. The soul is divided into three parts namely; the rational which is the seat of wisdom, the spirited part embodies courage or fortitude, the appetitive part is the level of emotions. The importance of this classification is the fact

that each should specialize and contribute to the whole for harmony. If each conforms to this requirement, then, division is enhanced and justice is enthroned. A contrary application of this principle is a recipe for social disequilibrium and by extension instability. It shows that the principle of justice has been negated and thus, morality is truncated. When this happens then, there will be no peace.

We agree with Plato in this regard because, it appears to us that the principle of allowing people to bring in their skills in their areas of specialization has not been fully utilized especially, in developing societies. Most societies that have applied this principle have benefited immensely in various spheres of social, economic and political developments. The effect is mostly seen in political appointments. Such appointments are not made on merit but on party's patronage. The result is a high level of corruption especially militating against the effective discharge of services. Such appointment is not only a negation of justice, but an attempt to make non-sense of moral standards expected of a society. People have different skills and if these skills are identified and tapped, the results could be amazing. It is important to make appointments based on such resourcefulness for the benefit of man and society.

Societies that have given primacy to this principle have derived much benefits of unimaginable proportion and we believe that much is still to be tapped in the area of services to people so as to feel the impact of government. Our governments in the developing world still adopt the master-servant relationship. Those in government know more than the ruled. This is not good enough . Policies are formulated and implemented

without the consent of those which the law is meant to serve. For any policy of government to succeed and produce good results, consultation should be adopted as a matter of urgency. This will give the governed a sense of belonging and by extension an effective participation in governmental policies.

Arnold (1959:146) mentioned some postulates of justice which are crucial to the survival of a society. These postulates are expressed in terms of some desired state of affairs. They are equality, liberty, security and order or obedience to God's will. We shall examine these postulates with a view to seeing their application in our societies. We shall also see whether they promote justice or injustice. Let us examine the first one.

a) **Equality**: This concept appears to have lost its meaning. We often say that all men are equal before God. All should be equal before the law. This applies to the dispensation of justice. We also state that men should be treated equal. These are all noble propositions but in terms of applications, these propositions appear to be meaningless especially, in a developing country like Nigeria, it is difficult to defend the proposition that we are created equal before God. The reason for this is that some circumstances of our birth, background and position make inequality fundamental. In most societies, only an insignificant number of people can rise to prominence through hard work. In some instances, no matter how hard you work, you still need somebody to push you up to prominence. Some people get this on a platter of gold. If this is the case as experience has shown what is the meaning of equality?

Plato rejected the concept of equality in his morality. This is backed by a strict division of society into three dominant classes. The guardians are those who have acquired through rigorous education the philosophic disposition. From here the philosopher-kings will emerge who should be in charge of leadership. The philosopher-kings have been able to transcend the sensible world and have attained the knowledge of the "good". Our observation here is that this men could abuse the power given to them and become authoritarian. Power has the capacity to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely as Jefferson stated. Plato's defense of this proposition is that those who have attained the knowledge of the good are not likely to fall below the moral standard of the good expected of then. The good is the foundation of justice and the end of intellectual progress.

Equality before the law is also defective. The reason for this is that some government officials in Nigeria and other societies are immune from prosecution while in office. We have seen cases where the law through the judiciary has been used as a protective tool. This goes to show that this proposition has a problem and cannot be sustained, it also shows that equality before the law is an illusion. It is a reflection of **George Orwell, (1945)** "all animals are equal but some are more equal than the others. This makes inequality inevitable. Plamenatz observed that in spite of the provisions of the law, equality is impossible. "Whatever the structure of rights and obligations, some people will always continue to do better than others, becoming more richer and more powerful, than their neighbours, so that if equality is to be maintained, it will always be necessary

to change the laws and to tamper with rights and obligations to the detriment of the rich and the exalted and to the advantage of the poor and lonely" **(Plamenatz, 1981:107).**

Plamenatz's position is very clear. Equality is not only impossible, it is also not desired. His reason for this is that people have various advantages over their neighbours and in their various pursuits for goals in society, these advantages come into play and guarantee their victory. Naturally, too, some people are gifted more than the others and this could be a source of advantage when certain tasks are being performed. He further defended inequality and inherited privileges and stated thus, "It is not enough to ensure that men are rewarded according to their talents, if they are not allowed to pass on their rewards to their children... Deprive them of those hope, and you weaken society by weakness a motive that caused men to make the best their talents" **(Ibid p.109).** He maintained that the privileges that were stated here are good for the community which obviously promotes progress and equity.

Plamenatz's position on equality seems to me to deviate from Plato's conception. The reason for this is that Plato's strict division of the society into three classes was to achieve harmony which by extension is the attainment of justice. This in turn will promote peace and stability in society. A critical analysis of Plamenatz's position is not likely to create an enabling environment for peace to thrive. His notion of equity and progress appear to be misapplied and are likely to promote chaos and instability. We must not lose sight of the fact that equality is an illusion. It is not tenable in practice. All we can attest to is that a conducive environment should be created to encourage people to actualize their

potentials. This is a healthy development if we really want progress, peace and stability. These characteristics are crucial to justice and by extension morality. Any society which tends to adopt Plamenatz's analysis of equality does not represent a society of high moral standard.

Our observation here is that equality of persons in society is not only an illusion but also indefensible. If people are treated according to skills and professional aptitudes, then, talking about equality is a total negation of justice. But it will amount to injustice if people with the same skill, professional competence and exposure are treated differently because of their social connections or privileges. This is the problem of justice in our society. We should be careful on the concept of equality and its application in human relations. It is bound to be abused because some people will have an upper hand anytime the concept of equality arises.

b) Liberty as a Postulate of Justice. The French revolution attached more importance to liberty, equality and fraternity. These three were thought to be inseparable and make life worth dying for. These three ideals of the revolutionary epoch were three aspects of a single moral order. The creation of that order was not only the inspiration of the American and the French revolutions, it continued to inspire liberal statesmanship throughout the nineteenth century. As the struggle continued, no one was able to raise some questions on the indivisibility of these concepts. With time, philosophical questions began to emerge as to whether these ideals could not be separated. On close examination, it was discovered that the reality of each of the ideals is realizable if they could stand

alone. Schneider (1956:21) citing **Sheen (1939)** linked the ideal of liberty with capitalism, equality with communism and fraternity with Catholicism. These revolutionary ideals later acquired some political ideologies. We agree with Sheen on the political ideologies these ideals transformed into and almost lost that original foundation of the ideals. For example, the socialist states popularized the ideal of equality as if it was a tool to reconstruct society. They failed to realize that capitalism cannot be sustained without expansionism. This led to their inevitable collapse. In concrete terms, most of the socialist states did not witness a true revolution but simply adopted the socialist ideology. For us in this research, there was no foundation for the socialist structure. Karl Marx, the exponent of socialism never defended equalitarianism as a political ideal but advocated egalitarianism.

Our analysis so far on equality shows that it is philosophically untenable. This view is expressed by Schneider (1956:26) citing **Stephen (1873)** that the social order must be based on the natural inequalities of men. In an ideal or well classified society, he maintained, class distinctions would correspond to natural differences. Henry Maine put forward this theory again (1885) and concluded that, liberty and equality are mutually exclusive ideals. What we can draw from here is that liberty and equality are in opposite direction. This accounts for the reason why the American revolution is patterned along liberty rather than equality. The reason for this in our view is that, it is possible to project the liberty of the individual rather than talking about equality of persons.

Schneider (1956:27) supporting this view, cites **Lowell (1889)** that "the American system" is based not on equality since equality tends towards socialism and paternalism, but on respect for personal liberty and private rights. The idea of natural rights of man he calls an "exploded doctrine" and basing his argument on the principles of J.S. Mill's utilitarianism, asserts that the general welfare is best promoted through economic liberty which implies economic in-inequality. An individual he says, must "be able to enjoy unmolested the fruits of his labour," no matter how large those fruits may be. He concluded that, liberty and equality are enemies to each other **(I bid).**

Some political ideologies without philosophical foundations collapsed because of seeing equality as a logical necessity. This is an obvious fact. The French revolution and some socialist programmes had set- backs because of the doctrine of equality hence the ideology of equality seems to be fading. This position was captured by Schneider (1956:29) citing **Graham (1907)** thus:

> *The doctrine that all men are equal is being gradually dropped, from inherent absurdity, and we may at anytime find it expedient o drop the jingle about a government, by the people, and for the people. ... competition is a law of nature. Nature is entirely neutral... If then, there be liberty, men get from her just in proportion to their works... Let it be understood that we cannot go outside of this alternative. Liberty, inequality, survival of the fittest, not liberty, equality, survival of the unfittest. The former carries society forward and favours all its best members, the later caries society downwards and favours all its worst members.*

There seems to be an unending conflict between liberty and equality as this research has shown. But what we can advocate here is equality of opportunity to education, to health, to shelter. Equality of opportunity as the name implies, are defined as those conditions

created by the state to insure that each man's share of wealth is determined solely by his natural abilities. What our position seem to consolidate here is that we should create a level playing ground for individuals to put their skills into a productive activity. This is justice manifested and full realization of morality.

Equality appears to be a lip service by its advocates. In the final analysis, it seems to portray an ideal for backwardness because those who propound it do not exhaust its practical dimension. Our analysis shows that it is a deceptive concept put forward for a selfish agenda knowing its obvious limitations. Fraternity depended so much on religious dimension. Most religious concepts like that are better preached as sermons for people to listen and see an area of possible application. Such actions with the increasing religious crisis in various societies make the application of fraternity an uphill task.

Our analysis of liberty as a political and social ideal seems to result in a complete moral attainment. We think that this premise is wrong. Liberty has been brutalized and seems to have lost its bearing in our moral setting. The continous invasion of one country over the other especially, the American and the Iraq debacle is a negation of what liberty stands for and a violation of the territorial integrity of each state to personal liberty. This trend, if unchecked will continue to threaten not only the programme of countries for survival but, will also destroy the foundation of justice and by extension morality. It makes much sense to encourage countries to develop and strengthen their economic bases than to weaken such bases through flexing of muscles in the name of policing the world. Injustice is a threat to world peace and security and everything must be done to reduce it

c) Security as a Postulate of Justice

Security is crucial to justice and morality. Plato's doctrine of Forms or ideas seems to be founded on security. By security we mean a social order free from change and fluctuations. If we cast our mind on the Athens of Plato's time, it was a society engrossed in perpetual conflicts, chaos and moral degeneration. He witnessed an acute decay in the political and social process evidenced in the physical world. In his estimation therefore, there was a crisis of societal security which threatened the foundation of the society.

His theory of Forms was an attempt to find lasting peace and harmony in human society to be realized through justice and morality. In his *Republic*, he expressed the view that if the three parts of the soul could function harmoniously by keeping to their respective functions, justice will be the ultimate result which will in turn promote law and order and of course, peace and stability. We can see that Plato was much concerned with justice which is the foundation of morality. His ideal society is a function of every segment using its skills for the promotion of the society's goals and policies. Today, our political system has lost this focus, hence, crisis which is the bedrock of instability. Social insecurity was a concern to Thomas Hobbes in his state of nature. A state of nature as the name implies is the state prior to the organization of civil society. This state was characterized by lack of morality, no laws, no authority, no sense of justice and injustice, no notion of right and wrong **(Omoregbe, 1993:195)**. The state of nature therefore, was a state of perpetual conflict, a state of war and insecurity among men. In such a state, says Hobbes, there was no progress, no development, no agriculture, no navigation, no industry," no knowledge of the face of the earth, no account of time, no arts no letters, no

society: and the worst of all, continual fear and danger of violent death; and the life of man was solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short **(Hobbes, 1651)**. The crisis of insecurity arising from the state of nature prompted men to form an organized society which in turn gave rise to morality. The emergence of morality instituted the notions of right and wrong, justice and injustice. It also curbed the propensity of men to unleash terror on each other and had recourse to law and order through constituted authority for conflict resolution. Comparing Hobbes' notion of morality and justice with that of Plato, we discovered that while Hobbes saw the leviathan as the sovereign the authority and the administrator of justice, Plato gave such powers to the first class of the guardians, the philosopher-kings who have acquired in his view, the philosophic disposition to rule.

There seems to be a common denominator which Plato and Hobbes were worried about and which took a greater portion of their philosophical postulations. This issue is insecurity manifested in perpetual conflict, an endemic instability which threatened the survival of civil society. Although, Hobbes' state of nature theory appears to be a philosophical fiction and Plato's theory of Ideas a metaphysical postulation, it seems to us that their basic features are present in civil society till today. Plato's solution appears too elitist accessible to a few intellectuals through dialectics because, the process of societal achievement of stability cannot be realized without passing through various levels of instability. This is why he integrated the Heraclitus theory of change with the Parmenides theory of permanence. He sees in these theories a union of opposites. What we are saying here as **Unah (2002)** observed is that he who propagates order must be a product of disorder, law a product of lawlessness stability a product of instability. Plato's

theory then, gave room for these traits of insecurity to galvanize us into security. This is a central thesis of Plato's theory of Ideas. It presents a panacea for insecurity to those who have attained a mental excellence. Unfortunately, our societies have witnessed an occurrence of mediocre leaders, those whose political and historical antecedents are questionable. Those who cannot differentiate justice from injustice or to put it better, those who prefer injustice to justice. The result of this is crisis whose origin sometimes defies human analysis and solution. Everywhere solutions are attempted, we can only make guess work as the immediate and remote causes but when they occur again we are caught unprepared for any concrete solution.

d) Order or obedience to God's will

The idea of justice and morality in general presupposes a society which is atomized and individualistic, a society of endemic conflict. It presupposes a society of people conscious of their unity in diversity and their diverse interest. The application of justice and morality as instruments to achieve order and civilized progress cannot be ignored. The problem with the application of justice to resolve a problem is difficult if we take into consideration the conflicting and diverse interests that abound in a given issue. It is in this connection that Arnold maintains that a strict adherence to the moral order or obedience to God's will is adequate to sustain the dispensation of justice. For him obedience to constituted authority or the sovereign will in turn create an atmosphere of peace and tranquility. His position seems to be anchored on the old doctrine of the divine right of kings. This view posits that God puts people in leadership position. People therefore are expected to obey and cooperate with those in authority in order to give room for stability.

This position is controversial because given the nature of man's selfish interest especially, the struggle for leadership position, it is doubtful whether can be sustained.

3.3   SOCIAL JUSTICE AS VIRTUE

Plato's central thesis in the *Republic* is that justice is part of human virtue. The word virtue is translated from the Greek word 'Arete' otherwise called excellence. Virtue came to mean the quality which entitles anything or person to be good. In this connection, things may be good as well as persons. For example, a knife may be good or bad, a school may be good or worse, a horse may be a good or a bad horse. What we are emphasizing here is that for a knife, school, or horse to be good, it is the virtue or the proper excellence of any of these items. It is the ability of any of the under listed - items to perform creditably a particular task assigned to it.

On the other hand, we can say of men who are better or worse as compared to others. In this regard, we look at virtue as the quality which the better man possesses in a higher degree than the worse. A man may be good in such professions as carpentry, boxing, arts, medicine or even in public speech. What makes a man good in the performance of these things we have mentioned may be referred to as virtue and it does not appear to be difficult in each case to specify what the virtue is. For instance, that a carpenter is good could be as a result of his capacity to make a good furniture from wood, a doctor may be said to be good because of his ability to carry out a diagnosis for an illness or in the case of a surgeon for carrying out a good surgery. It is possible at any point in time to specify or identify what the virtue in a man consists of.

Human virtue from a philosophical point of view goes beyond these departmental excellences as we have enumerated. Human virtue therefore, is what makes a man good. These kinds of excellences make those who possess them a good doctor, carpenter, boxer, orator but not necessarily a good man. The question arises as what sort of a capacity makes a man to be addressed as a good man? A man is not called a good man in terms of superiority in any departmental accomplishments such as medicine, sports, carpentry, etc. He can demonstrate this superiority in a higher degree. A person could be well specialized but still be called a bad man. Assuming a man combines some of these departmental excellences to the extent that he demonstrates a good sense of proficiency, can we say that he is a god man? According to Plato, such a man is still outside the purview of who a good man is. If this is the case, it means that we may have to interrogate Plato further to list or establish the characteristics of what makes one a good man apart from the departmental excellences we have been analyzing. If this is not done, we may deny the reality of human virtue. Consequently, it will be correct to ascribe to men superiority in departmental excellences. In other words, we may continue to posit that A is a good carpenter and B a better doctor than C, there is no real sense in which A can be said to be a good man or B a better man than C. Our conclusion here, therefore, is that if human virtue is a real thing, it must be possible to itemize its elements or constituent parts.

In the *Republic,* Plato identified four moral virtues. They are courage or fortitude, reason, temperance and justice **(Forster, 1942:38)**. Following this, Plato divided virtue into four

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main constituents. They are wisdom, courage, temperance and justice. The possession of any these is what makes a good man and if one has all of them, he is said to be a wholly good man. One may be lacking in any of the departmental excellences and this might not attract a reproach. For example, one might be a good carpenter but not a good boxer. This is a factual situation not a derogation of the person. On the other hand, if a man is deficient in courage, wisdom, temperance or justice it is enough not to describe him as a good man no matter his quality in the departmental excellence. We can see that these qualities or virtues we have mentioned occupied a pride of place in Plato's socio-political philosophy.

In the course of this research, we shall show how he recommended these virtues for leadership and personality development. According to him, they play a tremendous role in terms of effective administration, policy analysis and implementation so that decisions will have a critical and a philosophical direction for the benefit of man and society. These qualities as we can see are not to be picked any where by any body but a product of the mind. Those who can possess these virtues must have undergone an intellectual and philosophic mental excellence in the world of ideas. The disposition we are talking about is such that it is a skill and taking decisions as a leader becomes a second nature. For Plato, government is a science and that as a science it should be left to experts. He urges and sincerely believed that it is as absurd to govern by popular vote, as it would be to conduct medicine or navigation by popular vote. The error of democracy according to him is that it denies the possibility of science in government and his fundamental political demand is leave government to those that know how to do it (*Republic*, **1997, Robinson,**

1969:82-83). A lot of us may not agree with Plato in this regard but, it is the opinion of this research that, government business demands skill manifested in education and training for effective administration. Most governmental departments the world over, are crumbling because they disregarded Plato's prescription. We think that it should not be dismissed with a wave of the hand. Experience has shown that many of those that handle government affairs have no business being there because, they lack the skill and vision expected of effective administration. The motivation of those who seek government position seems to be based on financial gains rather than contributing to the welfare of the government through an efficient and effective policy. To this extent, Plato's theory of virtue as what makes the dispensation of justice possible is imperative and contributes to the welfare of men in society which ultimately promotes human well-being.

Plato gave primacy to justice among the virtues he enumerated **(Forster, 1942:38)**. Why did Plato give such primacy to justice? His reason is that justice is architectonic in relation to the other excellences. Another way to put it, is that justice is related to the other excellences as the work of an architect or master builder in the construction of a house. In such an activity, you have different skills from masons, joiners, wood carvers, sculptors, etc. All these people work under the direct supervision and co-ordination of the architects. The architects use these skills we have enumerated to supervise thoroughly to make sure that what ever is installed is fit and proper. For example, a carpenter can design a door but this has to pass the test of the supervisor who will make sure that the design of the house is not distorted. From here, we can see a check and balance as a way of maintaining balance and stature and thereby impose a kind of restraint for order and

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stability. The architectonic nature of justice accounts for that element of restraint which is the first thing apparent in it. Just as the authority of the architect touches the subordinate craftsmen as a restrictive force, curbing the exuberance of their production, confining their scope and limiting their freedom in the interest of the design as a whole, so justice operates as a restraint upon a man's particular capacity, with- holding him from many things which he has both the design and ability to do **(Foster 1942:42)**. Justice is given a pride of Place among the various virtues because of its ability for co-ordination and moderation in human conduct. This appears t o be the focus of Aristotle in his ethics.

Aristotle describes justice as the greatest of all virtues and defines it as "what is lawful," or what is fair and equal. He distinguishes between two kinds of justice, namely, universal and particular justice. Universal justice is synonymous with virtue. He who possesses it can exercise virtue towards his neighbour as well as himself **(Omoregbe, 1993:166)**. Remedial justice deals with fairness in human transactions both voluntary transactions (such as making promises, taking or giving loans) and involuntary transactions such as stealing and killing. He also added another type of justice called commercial justice (166). The concept of justice as fair and equal is a pointer to the basic problem experienced by man in various areas of human transactions. Our inability to practice justice is traceable to our inability to adopt the principle of transparency and accountability. Our transactions should be open in such a way that others can make a follow up. When this is lacking, we begin to assume certain things detrimental to the success of the transactions. According to Aristotle, universal justice enables us to exercise virtue not only to our selves but to our neighbours. This in our view, leads to

harmony, peace and progress and by extension, development. Its absence is the cause of friction, misunderstanding and above all, cheating which can lead to war among societies or assassinations among individuals. In conceiving justice as equality, Aristotle was of the view that equals should be treated equally and unequals should be treated unequally. His position here recognizes the existence of inequalities between men. Since men are not equal treating them as equals will create an imbalance and distortion. This may endanger hard work.

We may ask ourselves why Aristotle is laying a great deal of emphasis on justice. This is because it is the foundation of human happiness. Happiness he observed is the good which all human actions are directed. All men seek and aspire to happiness which is attainable through morality **(Omoregbe 1993:164).** The purpose of morality and its standard converge in happiness. Since happiness is crucial to man's well-being, we are then expected to live a moral life. This is an Aristotelian contribution to human well-being. He defined happiness as an activity of the soul in accordance with virtue. Since this is the case, happiness and virtue are united. He identified two kinds of virtues-intellectual and moral. Intellectual virtues include scientific knowledge, art, practical wisdom, intuitive reason, theoretical wisdom, sound deliberation, understanding and judgment. Moral virtues are embodied in justice, temperance, generosity and courage. These virtues totally agree with Plato's virtues as those things that make a man good. Aristotle used these virtues to teach the doctrine of the golden mean. What the golden mean tends to establish is that, virtue lies between two extremes, stressing that virtue is a mean between excess and defect. For instance, generosity is a mean (that is, it is a

midway) between miserliness (an extreme) and extravagance (another extreme) temperance is a mean between total abstinence (an extreme) and self indulgence (another extreme) **(Omoregbe, 1993:164-165).**

The concept of mean in Aristotle's ethics is important because, it acts as a guide when we are faced with practical problems. It stresses the need for moderation and self-control when we are confronted with moral problems. Virtue is preferred to vice because, virtue exercises an effective control in moderating human behaviour. On a comparative angle, Buddhism and Confucianism all in the East propagated the theory of virtue. According to them, man is good by nature. All men are endowed by nature with a tendency towards goodness and a feeling of goodness. All men have virtues within them, hence virtues are innate in man. They do not come from outside man but within **(Omoregbe 2000:294).** The views expressed by these philosophers have a direct influence on personality development and by extension leadership. They see virtue as a disposition and needs a conducive environment for its nurture and subsequent development. To this end, good environment is required for its growth and inculcation. It means that a leader who is campaigning for a corrupt free society from his people must show good example by living a life free from corruption. He must show a high degree of equity, transparency and accountability for his people to have confidence in him. Virtue when properly instituted and developed becomes the foundation of happiness which is a product of justice.

Since virtue is highly priced, and also recommended for leadership, and as a guide for decision, how is it acquired.? For Aristotle, it is an internal disposition, a permanent state of mind inclined towards good actions which spring spontaneously from it. Another way to put it is that, virtue is the state of mind which spontaneously gives rise to good actions as a matter of habit. If we concede virtue in this direction, it then means that not all good actions are virtuous. It is not true that all persons are virtuous. A person is said to perform a virtuous action when he is consistent and when such action is performed as a spontaneous expression of a permanent inner disposition. Habit is said to be the second nature, this means that some good actions are performed spontaneously without due reflection. This is what virtue seems to exemplify. So, virtue is acquired by constant and persistent practice through a long period of time. Since we are expected to acquire virtue in order to be virtuous by constant practice and by being religious about it, it means that virtue should be given priority as early as possible in life. At an early age of our mental development, effort should be made to acquire virtue because once that level is passed, virtue is not likely to be acquired. It means that our attempt in character formation is an exercise in futility.

Aristotle was of the view that, it is impossible for a person to be suddenly transformed from a long established habit. We share this view completely. Take for example, a military man who has lived all his life through force and commanding people to take instructions from him, after his military service, and he is made a civilian leader, not much of civil disposition is expected from him. The case might be worse when such a person contests and wins a presidential election in a controversial circumstance. The

moment he assumes office many controversial policies and decisions will trail his administration. In such a situation, there will be accusations and counter accusations from members of parliament Such accusations ranging from constitutional breaches, not observing due process and lack of consultation will be prevalent. This is not only a breach of the constitution and the rule of law but a preparation of what Crossman regards as the proliferation of oligarchies which will ultimately lead to instability. It is also a violation of the peoples' right and a perversion of justice. The occurrence of such crisis is a signal that all is not well with a given political and social system. It is a signal of instability and a distortion of the political structure and a threat to the quest for social and political stability which Plato's theory of justice is meant to address. What this shows is that man cannot easily abandon his second nature so suddenly and radically. The rule of law in a society is an important obligation which citizens should embrace. Those who attain political power through the barrel of the gun are not likely to manifest good virtues which ultimately will make one a virtuous man. It is difficult from this position to expect such characters to demonstrate a high sense of leadership qualities. This is the tragedy of African countries which Nigeria is part and parcel of.

Our thesis in this regard, is to lean on justice as a moral virtue to which a person is disposed to attain the golden mean in all good actions through a humanistic rationality. When this is done, the result will be seen in various state policies whose objective is for the well-being of the ruled. Most governments in Africa favour the rulers more than the ruled. The mission of the ruled is no longer to compete with them but to be carried along through a more radical transformation of their well-being and to have a sense of

belonging. Thomas Aquinas gave credence to this when he observed that justice is one of the cardinals of human virtues. According to him, justice is the firm and constant will to give each his due **(Ozumba 2001:64).** The concept of justice also demands equality of all men, the quality of being right and fair.

The salient issues in Aquinas postulations are fairness, equality in terms of being right and equitable. We have discussed in details the concept of equality before the law and noted some contradictions. Our position on equality as it relates to justice is, that since there are some basic conditions that make men unequal by nature, equality is not likely to be attained. What we can advocate then, is the political will for those that dispense justice to treat equals as equals and unequals unequally. If this is faithfully pursued, there will be some elements of stability and less friction in human societies.

The commercialization of justice, which is a reflection of the thesis of Thrasymarchus, does not augur well for the so-called developing democracies. This is not to posit that the advanced democracies are better as far as promoting justice is concerned. In fact, we have reached a position where it is difficult to determine whether justice is being practiced in various sectors of governmental decisions. The removal of constituted government on the pretex that such government acquired weapons of mass destruction is no longer valid. We think, it is time a world body such as the United Nations order should be respected to ensure peace and stability in the world. This we think the International justice system should aim to achieve. World peace is now a challenge more than it was before the outbreak of the 1st and 2nd world wars.

The position of Thrasymarchus that justice is in the interest of the stronger has been rekindled in the face of the politics of the United States of America. Our experience of their actions against less developed countries is a confirmation of the doctrine that might is right. Our position is that might is not right and that whatever that is happening today, is as a result of perversion of justice. To ensure harmony, even development and world peace efforts should be intensified to give justice a pride of place in all aspects of human relations and transactions. This will take us to another issue of justice as a bond not only to individual, states but to nations and the world in general for peace and security.

3.4   JUSTICE AS THE BOND OF SOCIETIES

Hadley Cantril (1961) made an observation which today reflects the violation of justice by man in our environment which has catastrophic consequences. He summarised this observation thus,

> *The turbulence of our times is basically a turbulence in the human spirit. The situation men and women find themselves in today of course, is a recurrent one in human history. They are seeking as they have sought for centuries the opportunity to live in peace with one another, to have a chance to get the satisfactions out of living that make living worth while according to the common consensus of people everywhere. Bu the situation now has a new sense of urgency because of the unprecedented frustrations and dangers created by unprecedented opportunities and hopes inherent in man's new artifacts and his new interdependence. What is required today, just as it was required at other critical times in history, is a self-conscious awareness of this human situation so the turbulence can be somewhat calmed and its component forces better control (Cantril,, 1961:IX-X).*

One will be correct to title this submission by Cantril as an alarm. As at the time this alarm was raised, there was a threat of nuclear weapons on humanity. International law which acted as a restraint was not adhered to. So, the need for a revitalization of the law which is the product of justice becomes imperative. If the law is to be reformed does it mean that it can no longer cope with the regulation of man's conduct in society? This is a serious question.

A similar voice recorded this trend in the 18th world congress of philosophy held in Brighton in August 1988. The theme of the congress as edited by P. Fedoseyer was, *The problem of man as philosophy.* The congress was of the opinion that a new political thinking should be evolved. According to them, the modern world is complicated, diverse, dynamic and shot through with contending tendencies and contradictions. It is the world of most difficult alternatives, anxieties and hopes. Never before has our homes on earth been exposed to such great political and physical stresses **(Fedoseyer, 1988:45)** In his submission, he suggested a practical step to be adopted which lies in the total overhaul of our political system through a philosophic creativity of both ethical and intellectual orientation towards our socio-cultural values. The reason for this in his view, is because of the concept of unity in diversity in our social and political composition. This makes it imperative to adopt a new method of evaluating our political ideologies for accommodation, tolerance and solidarity. We agree with this position because, our modern world is at the cross-road in terms of a humanistic political culture. Injustice has become the order of the day. The most powerful countries are dominating and crippling the source of survival of the less developed countries through corrupt leadership. At this

point in time, we need as a matter of urgency a critical evaluation of our political system through a philosophical creativity in terms of instituting a more radical justice system for our tomorrow to be assured.

In another development, the former president of the defunct Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) Mr. Mikal Gorbachev condemns the American led war in Iraq as illegal and immoral. According to him, the United States and their allies violated international law and simply shoved the United Nations Security Council aside in completely ignoring world opinion in this mater. He stated that, it was whimsical to believe that the United Sates could now assume to shape the course of human destiny. A nation which has written democracy on her flag now grasps for totalitarian methods to achieve its aims. Those who will change the earth must not depend on the politicians of the earth to do it for them **(Gorbachev 2002)**.

If it is possible to unify all that we are saying here, one will point out one fundamental problem. This problem is the absence or lack of justice in our dealings with individuals, states or countries. This accounts for frequent crisis between different people and countries. It means that there is an urgent need to restructure the existing social and political order on the foundation of justice and fair play. Plato has observed in the *Republic* that, justice is not only a part of human virtue, it is also that quality in men which makes them capable of entering into political relations with one another, and so forming political societies. Societies are therefore, made possible when each person that makes up the society is able to restrain himself from doing certain things which are

inimical to the overall peace and stability of the society. What it means here, is that, peace is possible when each individual exhibits a high degree of co-operation in various endeavours in society. In this way, the bond that unifies society is made possible. This bond is justice. It is an identical quality which makes man good and social. This identification appears to be the first and fundamental principle of Plato's political philosophy.

The task now, and a serious one for that matter, is how to consolidate this bond for an enduring peace and stability in human societies. It is worthy of note that, the Sophists recognised and admitted that justice or morality was essential to the existence and survival of political society but, they denied that it constituted human excellence. They also admitted that a man had to limit his individual desires and obey the regulations of his community to enable him live in society with other persons. The argument of the Sophists is that, granted that, justice is necessary to the existence of society but that, it does not make a man better. We think they are right if our experience in human society is anything to go by. A simple way to make what we are saying clearer is that, injustice appears to get more popular than justice. But our position here is that, in the realm of what is on ground, the Sophists are correct. This is because they are describing justice as it operates in the society of men. On the other hand, Plato's conception of justice is in the realm of the ought, that is, what justice ought to be.

The question now is, which is better to observe in the long run? Is it justice or injustice? Our response here will determine to a large extent our conception of a better society, a

society under the rule of law. The rule of law in this context stipulates guidelines for judicial procedures. Three assumptions are prominent here . They are:

a)   No man should be made to suffer in person or in property, except for a definite breach of the law

b)   No man is above the law.

c)   Individuals have inalienable rights which should be safeguarded by the constitution. **(Unah, 1993:48-49)**

These assumptions were made by A.V. Dicey but Jim Unah further summarised these assumptions as the principles of legality, equality and liberty. On close observation, he identified some limitations in the doctrine of the rule of law. Such limitations are seen in the executive usurpation of the judiciary. We have seen cases where the executive interferes with the function of both legislative and judicial arms thereby making nonsense of the principles of legality, equality and liberty. We have argued in this research that, the principle of equality before the law is an illusion. The issue of the liberty of the individual is also not practicable but only in principle.

Based on this short coming, the feeling that law inherently is or should be necessary for man in a properly ordered society receives little encouragement from the long succession of leading Western philosophers from Plato to Karl Marx, who in one way or the other have supported the rejection of law **(Lloyd, 1987:11)**. It is obvious that Plato's Republic is an attempt to discover and analyze the basis of justice but his experience from the Athenian society shows a very low regard for justice. To this end, he de-emphasized the law as a binding proposition. For him, the execution of justice in his ideal state should be

given to the philosopher kings whose education and wisdom were such that there was no need to shackle them by a higher law **(Paton, 1964:100).**

Plato's position on the law as the instrument of social control is not in doubt but, his low regard is that law hijacked justice which is not likely the end product of law but, its essence. Our position here, is that, law if properly implemented, will bring about the attainment of social justice which we feel has immeasurable advantages. One of the basic advantages in our view, is that law is a means of attaining social harmony by curbing the evil passions of man. Man's nature was intrinsically evil and social progress could not be attained without the restraints of penal laws **(Lloyds, 1987:14).** His position is supported by Bodin, when he maintained that the original state of man was one of disorder, force and violence. For Thomas Hobbes, the life of man in the state of nature was in a state of perpetual warfare, where the life of man was nasty, brutish and short. He observed that, in the state of nature man is wholly guided by egoism. Life was dominated by a paralyzing fear of death because there prevails a war of all against all. Man was a wolf to his fellowman. There is no question of sympathy, disinterestedness and love. The state of nature is identical with barbarism and inhumanity. Spinoza, a rationalist philosopher, expressed a similar view that religion recommends that man should love his neighbour but, realistically, this teaching has not reduced egoism in man. Man is still engrossed with the lust for power, vengeance, honour and above all, envy. In the church, people embrace the doctrine of love but, in their dealings, in business or political office, the picture is different as they try to destroy one another. In more recent times, Sartre postulated in his philosophy of hatred that, man's unfair dealings with his fellowman is

part and parcel of the reality of life. This reality is manifested in barbarism and inhumanity. This state of affairs ought to be confined to a certain epoch in man's developmental stage but the reverse is the case.

This is because it appears to be an aspect of man's co-existence. The attempt of man to destroy his fellowman only tended to destroy society and this, necessitated an articulated "Social contract" which automatically is law to restrain man's inhumanity and barbarism. In the opinion of David Hume, a Scottish philosopher, without law government and coercion, human society could not exist, and this makes law a must for human societies. Machiavelli, a celebrated Italian philosopher and the proponent of the maxim "The end justifies the means" advised princes to disregard their pledges when there is a conflict between such pledges and their own interest. His argument was based on the fact that men are naturally bad and will not observe their faith towards you, so, you must in the same way, not observe yours to them **(Machiavelli, 1997).**

We have analyzed the problem of man as a selfish being that needs law to curb his excessive impulses. In the midst of this problem, is a school of thought which argues that man was originally created by nature that due to sin, corruption or some other internal weakness, such as avarice, man's original and true nature had become distorted and thus, requires for its control the rigours of a punitive system of laws. This school of thought is championed by Seneca and J.J. Rousseau. In their views, men lived in what they termed a "golden age" of primeval innocence when men lived simple, happy and well ordered lives without the need for a law. They maintained that man's life at this stage was

directed to the common good. This view has prompted a call for a return to nature. A return to nature as the name implies is that state of serene atmosphere, a man's unspoiled nature of a happier society in which uncorrupted natural impulses will replace a coercive regime of law **(Lloyds,1987).**

A call for return to "nature" in our view sounds noble but this is not practicable in an age of man's social and economic advancement. This is one of the objections to Plato's ideal state. There is no doubt that, man is selfish and therefore, a serious social control mechanism ought to be put in place to control his passions. We see law as a necessary step to achieve this objective. Our task now is to examine how philosophy evaluates law as an instrument of social control and a social force binding societies. This philosophical school, is concerned primarily with the rightness of the law and the extent it aids society in attaining goals conceived by human reason. Thus, the standard for the appraisal of law must be found in a philosophy of social life, in a set of social ideals. Law must be studied both as a product of culture and as a means of advancing it. Law is essentially a social means to a social end, which in the final analysis is the achievement of social justice **(Rodee and Anderson et all, 1983:58).**

We have always maintained that the goal of any democratic government is the attainment of justice. Law therefore exists to reach this goal although the result in most so- called democracies is below this expectation. According to St. Augustine, justice is the only feature that distinguishes a state from a band of brigands. Like the state the brigands might occupy territory, hold people in subjection and successfully deify external

authority but their power will be arbitrary, probably capricious and certainly devoid of legitimacy and regularly established principle **(I bid p.54)**. We agree for this position because force uninformed by the principles of law is the negation of law. Force in negating law also destroyed the civilized values that give meaning and direction to law. Law also encompasses the do's and don'ts of man's daily experience. Through the do's and don'ts, man is guided in avoiding those actions that negatively affect the peace of societies. This is in conformity of justice which is the essence of law. According to Salmond, justice is the ultimate guide by which a law is judged and also law is a basic technique by which justice may be achieved **(Salmond, 1947:41)**. In this connection, justice becomes the moral, fundamental, civilized expectation of man. The purpose of an ideal system of law ought to be justice which implies the existence of ideal relations between all human beings and the society. Justice therefore, depends on a scale of social values. As much as we recommend law as a social control mechanism, we still find out that some laws are unjust. What should be done when such situation occurs? A law is said to be unjust, when it goes against justice, against humanity.

One of the fundamental questions of the philosophy of law is concerned with the essence of the "ought" of justice, the obligation to do what is right. The legal order sometimes is not identical with what is right. In most cases, it goes counter to what is right. At this stage, justice compels man to reform the legal order in order to bring such law in harmony with justice. To this end, law must be revised and updated from time to time in order to bring them into the purview of justice and forestall injustice. The historical concept of natural law shows that at a time in legal development, the human essence was

at dispute with the legal order. The struggle about the natural law must be viewed as the search for a foundation and a critical norm of the legal order.

Without justice as a fundamental social control, law would rest essentially upon sterile grounds of pure authority. This does not augur well for peace and stability because, at that stage, it will be difficult to differentiate just law from an unjust law. Any study of law conceived as the willingness to abide by the legal order, one could easily see how much "humanity" there is in society because its members simply observe the law **(William and Henry, 1969:184).** They maintained further that, in times of peace, the legal order is always sacrosanct, indisputable and definitive. This is true no doubt, it is only in controversial circumstances, and to forestall arbitrariness, that man resorts to natural law which is grounded on morality. The establishment of a legal principle in order to attain justice, shows to a large extent, the humanization of human relationship. To this end, any legal order which is not explicated as an essential aspect of justice is an exercise in futility. It is like building a house without a foundation. The collapse of such a house is inevitable.

The law should be seen as a binding force for peace and stability in society. The establishment of a legal order whose objective is to attain justice is a first step on the way to effective humanization, taming the "wolf" the first victory of power over barbarism and inhumanity. The legal order whose objective is justice takes necessary steps to effectively establish humanity, it guarantees a certain stability to humanity that already

has been attained. This stability is the expression of a society's firm will not to sink below a level of humanity **(I bid p.196).**

We have been able to stress the need to give justice a chance in our various societies through a more humanistic legal system. Conflicts between individuals, corporate bodies and societies are traceable to injustice which is an expression of man's aggressive instincts and egoism. Philosophically, we came to the conclusion that laws which are against humanity should be reviewed. This is a serious problem in many societies. Man's liberty is always tampered with as there is no respect for the rule of law. We are of the view that a good legal order whose goal is the promotion of justice is a necessary condition not only for peace and stability but for effective administration and by extension sustainable development. A good legal order will further consolidate a bond existing between different societies and will ultimately contribute to world peace and progress. International law has suffered a lot under some powerful countries in the world because, judgments are not enforced and this creates unnecessary tension in the world. A return to obedience to laws will strengthen existing relations and bring about peace and stability.

3.5 SOCIAL JUSTICE AND HUMAN RIGHTS

In the last section of this research, we stressed the necessity of law as an instrument of social justice which has the function of social control and binding force on societies. Arising from this analysis, is the concept of right of the individual in society. Right in this context is derived from justice and also makes meaning through law. What does it mean

to have a right? Does it have any relationship to duty? If I say it is my right to have X, am I required to do Y to be able to justify my having X? These are philosophical problems in the analysis of the concept of right. Ordinarily, the word right can be explained this way, it is right (morally good) for us to demand our rights (things due to us). The emphasis in this proposition is that, our action to other people in our relationship with them should reflect the way they act towards us. Therefore, we have

a) Right as opposed to wrong

b) Right as a correlative of duty **(Gonsalves, 1989:196).**

Philosophically, right leans on morality and therefore, morally good. It is also used in place of just actions, just law, just deed or just claim. For right to have meaning, it should embody the idea of duty. What we are saying in essence, is that for a more meaningful application of the concept of right, it is expected that duties are performed. For example, if I say, it is my right to enjoy some social services, it is expected of me to pay my tax. If taxes are not paid, the provision of social services is affected. So, to actualize our rights, certain obligations are expected of us. We have posited that right leans on morality. This implies that right is morally inviolable. On a more definite point, right is defined as one's moral power over what he possess. From this definition, it means that right exists in the individual possessing it and is therefore, primary and natural. If it is primary and therefore natural, it means that its violation could be challenged. This is where rights are founded on law so as to give it legitimacy. If we talk of right as natural, it then means that they are fundamental to our social and political relations. This is why they are called fundamental human rights.

Fundamental human rights are important because they try to emphasis the humanness of justice. Plato did not use the concept of right in his *Republic,* rather he spoke of the human good and human happiness and the virtues and duties required to attain them. Plato's interest in justice was necessitated by the injustice of the Athenian society which was an obstacle to the attainment of social justice. A close observation and analysis of human rights today is philosophically meaningless, because it is more impoverished and does not contain those human ends envisioned in Plato's theory of justice. The concept of human rights in our political culture today, appears to be more universal, democratic and easily understood especially among the elites. It has assumed a principal gateway into the nature of justice and those ends we see as crucial to our humanity. This position is supported by **Fukuyama, (2002:106)** when he argued that, rights are the basis of our liberal democratic political order and key to contemporary thinking about moral and ethical issues. He maintained that any serious discussion of human rights must ultimately be based on some understanding of human ends or purposes, which in turn must always rest on a concept of human nature.

His position of grounding human right on human ends or purposes agrees with Plato's theory of justice and the fact that it is dependent on human nature. Human rights in our view, makes a lot of social and political sense when it is viewed from human nature. The concept of human nature found an early analysis in Plato's *Republic* when he divided the soul into three parts- a desiring part, a spiritual part and a rational part. These three parts are not reducible to one another and in many ways not commensurable. The rational part

is given primacy because it acts as the pilot of the soul. It is the seat of reason and cognition and therefore, directs all other parts.

Spinoza understands natural rights thus,

> *By natural rights I understand the very laws or rules of nature, in accordance with which everything takes place, in other words, the power of nature itself. And so, the natural right of universal nature, and consequently of every individual thing, extends as far as is power, and according, whatever any man does by the highest natural right, and he has as much right over nature as he as power* (Benn & Peters, 1963:90).

Spinoza seems to be identifying right with power. His position appears to ground right on power. But such a position appears to be paradoxical because, if we depend on power to actualize our rights then, it may no longer be natural. Basing our realization of right on power shows that such right is meaningless if we do not posses power. The position that right is dependent on power appears to have the bent of legal and moral positivism. Positivism in general is of the view that we cannot derive "is" from 'ought.' what this means is that 'is' statements are factual and therefore empirical, while "ought" is not. David Hume a British empiricist philosopher is an exponent of this view. In his work on human nature, he made the point that,

> *In every system of morality with which I have hitherto met. I have always remarked that the author proceeds for sometime, in the ordinary way of reasoning and establishes the being to a God, or makes observations concerning human affairs; when of a sudden I am surprised to find that instead of the usual copulation of propositions, is and is not I meant with no proposition that is not connected with an ought or an ought not. This change is imperceptible; but is however, of the last consequence. For as this ought or ought not, expresses*

some new relation or affirmation, it is necessary that it be observed and explained; and at the same time, that a reason should be given for what seemed altogether inconceivable, how this new relation can be a deduction from others, which are entirely different from it **(Hume, 1985:521).**

The summary of Hume's thesis is that moral rules cannot be deduced from empirical statements. This view was challenged by Maclutype who stated that one could be derived from the other. For example, if I stick a knife on Smith, they will send me to jail; but I do not want to go to jail; so I ought not (had better not) stick a knife on him. There are a huge variety of human wants, needs and desires that can produce an equal diversity of oughts. **(Fukuyama, 2002:115-116)** Utilitarianism also attempted to derive 'is' from ought by creating moral oughts by seeking to satisfy human ends. This is a bold effort in our view.

3.6   HUMAN RIGHTS

Kant defined right as the condition under which the wishes of one man can be reconciled with the wishes of every other man according to a general law of freedom **(Kant, 1985).** The problem of Kant's definition is his notion that all men have equal share in the external goods of the world. This is not always the case. Men have shown that equality is contrary to nature. Men are endowed differently and this makes inequality inevitable. This position does not affect the fact that man has some rights which are natural and fundamental. They are fundamental in the sense that, they are basic to human existence and necessary to man's self-fulfillment and happiness **(Omoregbe, 1997:96).** From this position, we can state that, human right is a condition that is right for people in society by

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virtue of the fact that they are human beings. If this right is ascribed to human beings because they are human, it then means that, such rights cannot be extended to animals. But sometimes we hear of people campaign for animal rights. This research is of the opinion that since animals are not humans and for the fact that they lack rationality, they cannot have right. If we ascribe right to them it then means that we should expect them to perform some duties. However, we can be kind to them but we cannot talk of a violation of their rights.

Rand (1968) examined human rights from a moral angle when she says,

> *Rights are a moral concept- the concept that provides a logical transition from the principles guiding an individual's actions to the principles guiding his relationship with others, the concept that preserves and protects individuals morality in social context – the link between the moral code of man and the legal code of a society, between ethics and politics. Individual rights are the means of subordinating society to moral law.*

Her position on rights stresses the need for an individual to respect others and also to fulfill his obligation in society. When this is done, the right of the individual will impose a duty on society to respect the moral law. The reason for this is that rights are fundamental to the individuals social and material well-being. Since these rights are fundamental, it also means that they are natural and not just by custom or conventions. They are not given by man although man tries to confirm their institution through bills, declarations or constitutional provisions.

3.6.1 THE PHILOSOPHICAL PROBLEMS OF HUMAN RIGHTS

The concept of human rights seems to have emerged from naturalism. Natural rights faced a severe criticism especially from positivism. Naturalism maintained that what is morally right or wrong is something we can know just as we know anything else about nature (Machan, 1975:50). Criticisms against natural rights were not philosophically sound and as such, there was a kind of shift in emphasis from natural rights to human rights. To this end, most discourse in political theory today dwell more on human rights or individual or personal rights. This in our view, gives room for the source, meaning and the extent of such rights. A human right is explained as something due a person in a social context because, of his membership in the class of humanity because, he is a human being (Ibid, p. 51). The philosophical dimension to human right is that such a right cannot be given away except by death. It cannot be thought of as object or property but is more of a relationship or condition. Human rights is often thought of to be entirely parasitic or dependent on the idea of a legal right (I bid).

If human right is parasitic on legal rights, it is based on the fact that law is needed to protect it from violation. Most of our human rights are easily violated. This ought not to be. The attainment and sustenance of human rights in our modern society poses a serious challenge to our legal system. We believe that our various laws should aim at protecting human rights and make social justice meaningful. Human rights have always been relevant to political theories and the solution to man's political problems. They have served as the philosophical foundation of Bill of Rights, United Nations Declaration and the various Constitutions of many countries.

There is a flagrant violation and abuse of human rights all over the world. This violation is worse in developing countries. Ordinarily, human rights are grounded on the rule of law but most governments in developing countries abuse the rights with impunity. This is a set back to these countries in terms of attaining human happiness. The function of any government is to achieve the greatest degree of happiness to the greatest number, but our experience shows other wise. This makes it mandatory to evaluate our understanding and necessity of human rights for social justice.

3.6.2 HUMAN RIGHTS AS THE GOAL OF JUSTICE

The social and political dimension of human rights can be traced to the 16th and 17th centuries when human rights were systematically documented as instruments of law. **Omoregbe (1994:80)** has listed them thus: The English Petition of Rights (1627); The Habeas Corpus Act (1679); The American Declaration of Independence (1776); The United States Constitution (1787); The American Bill of Rights (1791); The French Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizens (1789); Most recent is the United Nations universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), and the European Convention on Human Rights (1949).

The principle behind these declarations is to demonstrate in clear terms the limits of power between the state and the individuals that make up the state. This limitation became necessary because, of the absolute powers of some states which threatened the right and dignity of the individual. These declarations also made it clear that the state should comply with the rule of law. A disturbing trend is that most of these governments

do not respect the rule of law. They rather, through the state apparatuses abuse and deny individuals their liberty and freedom.

The American Declaration of Independence (1776) provided a platform for a profound thesis on human rights. It states as follows:

> *We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. — That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, — That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness*
> *(http://www.ushistory.org/declaration/document/,2007).*

The American constitution stressed equality, liberty and happiness as man's natural rights. Governments are instituted in order to fulfill these objectives. Such government is empowered to abolish such laws when they fail in their social responsibility. This is the essence of democracy. Unfortunately, many of the countries that practice democracy today do not reflect these democratic truisms. Power does not reside in the people but in the government of the day. This is a contradiction of democracy. The American constitution also gave much credence to God as if it is a religious state. Its secular position and especially its aggression on less developed countries contradicts the content of this document. If it is self-evident that men are created equal and, in our view, this is unrealistic, it means that the founding fathers of this document misconstrued the meaning

of equality. Our position is based on the fact that racism is an ugly trait in American social and political environment. Some of these rights are not explicit in terms of citizens and non-citizens. Laws are constantly reviewed and we feel this is not an exception.

In a similar vein, the French declaration of the rights of man and citizens (1789) shows the importance of human rights. It states as follows:

> *The representatives of the French people, organized as a National Assembly, believing that the ignorance, neglect, or contempt of the rights of man are the sole cause of public calamities and of the corruption of governments, have determined to set forth in a solemn declaration the natural, unalienable, and sacred rights of man, in order that this declaration, being constantly before all the members of the Social body, shall remind them continually of their rights and duties; in order that the acts of the legislative power, as well as those of the executive power, may be compared at any moment with the objects and purposes of all political institutions and may thus be more respected, and, lastly, in order that the grievances of the citizens, based hereafter upon simple and incontestable principles, shall tend to the maintenance of the constitution and redound to the happiness of all (http://www.hrcr.org/docs/frenchdec.html, 2007).*

The French declaration recognizes the sanctity of human rights. It also stressed equality, freedom and the preservation of the individual in political and social context. We can liken this to the American declaration of independence. The concept of equality has become a regular denominator. The concept is so important that we may begin to look for a new meaning altogether. Equality is a member of the French trinity of liberty and fraternity. They tended to emphasize equality from a theological perspective but, in practice, the notion that all men are created equal needs a second examination. If we are created equal, why do we have different abilities and circumstances? The French

declaration also shows the suppression and violation of the individual which necessitated this declaration. The problem in modern society especially Africa, is that, most governments are products of military dispensation having no regard to the rule of law. This makes human rights far from being an issue of serious concern. The violation of human rights is the cause of crisis, conflicts and in some cases ethnic wars.

The universal declaration of human rights by the United Nations (1948) seems to be a derivation of both the American declaration of (1776) and the French declaration of (1789]. The reason for this position is that, these declarations recognize the dignity and inalienable rights of all members of the human family. This declaration is committed to the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world which is the focus of this research. The content of this declaration is thirty in number and space will not allow us to accommodate all. We might be forced for ease of convenience, to point out some of them which we come across everyday.

1.   All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.

2.   Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this declaration Without distinction of race, colour, sex, language and religion.

3.   Everyone has a right to life, liberty and security of person.

4.   All forms of slavery should be abolished.

5.   No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

6.   Everyone has a right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law.

7.   All are equal before the law.

8.   Everyone has the right to an effective remedy by the competent national tribunals for acts of violating the fundamental rights granted him by the constitution or law.

9.   No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.

13.(i)   Everyone has the right for freedom of movement.

18.   Everyone has the right for freedom of thought, conscience and religion.

19.   Everyone has freedom of opinion and expression.

20 (i).   There is also freedom of peaceful assembly and association.

23 (i).   Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.

26 (i).   Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory.

26 (ii).   Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the   strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance, and friendship among all nations racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace

The United Nations universal declaration of human rights covers all aspects of human activities under the sun. It is also a document covering all member states. But in application one begins to wonder whether some of the member states that are signatories understand what these articles mean. This difficulty stems from the fact that some member states do not have the financial muscle, the social environment, legal framework, and political will towards their implementation. Take for instance, the right to education,

employment and social security. Some of the advanced democracies such as United States, Britain and France can to some extent sustain their implementation but, this cannot be said of African countries. In this continent, we seem to have gone to sleep as far as these rights are concerned. These rights are predicated on developed and sustained legal frameworks, which are lacking in our environment. This calls for urgent attention because in terms of human rights, nobody takes Africa serious. Those who claim to practice them are practicing large-scale dictatorship. What should be done at this stage of our political development?

The idea of human rights is quite simple. It presupposes that human beings have certain rights simply by virtue of being human. These rights are necessary conditions of the good life. Because of their singular importance, individuals are entitled to, indeed required to claim them and society is enjoined to allow them. Other wise, the quality of life is seriously compromised **(Ake, 1987).** He maintained that, the idea of human rights, or legal rights in general presupposes a society which is atomized and individualistic, a society of perpetual conflict. It presupposes a society of people conscious of their separateness and their particular interest and anxious to attain them. Such a right is a claim which the individual may make against other members of society and the state and society has obligation to uphold them.

A critical examination of these values embedded in the declaration of human rights shows that they are alien in Africa or that they do not make sense in our environment. We assume that the state is supreme to the individual and therefore, has no interest. We

assume harmony not divergence of interest, competition and conflict. That is why we favour a one party state where we have no room for the opposition and this we think make decision making faster. This is not true, for such policy may lack the required articulation and philosophical systemization and analysis.

The Western notion of human right concentrates on peaceful assembly, freedom of speech and thought, fair trail, education, employment and unlawful detention. These rights in our view mean a lot for people who are technologically, socially and politically advanced. Their goal at this period of civilization seems to be self-fulfillment. The opposite of this is the case in Africa and Nigeria in particular. Our problems are rooted in poverty, disease, illiteracy and a brutal struggle for survival. The problem of illiteracy is a set back to our basic understanding of what human rights is all about. People are left with no choice but to swallow whatever policy the government of the day puts in place no matter the pains. Organized protest is discouraged even though the right to stage a peaceful protest is a fundamental human right. This is unlike Western society where there is a high level of enlightenment on human rights and their violation. Even in western society, the right to a peaceful protest is a fundamental right but sometimes people suffer untold hardship in the exercise of this right.

In Africa, only a few can fight for the rights that society prescribes. These few people who have the resources can go to every length to realize their rights. Their power alone facilitates their result. Such powerful people do not appear in court and, so, equality before the law may mot make sense to them. Those who lack the resources to exercise

their rights are trampled upon by injustice through the state power. Some die in the process because of their under privileged situation. This is very appalling.

Democracy with its global character is impacting positively on human rights and this means that Africa and Nigerian is beginning to take interest in Human right. The reason is that, Western nations now use good human right record as a condition for loans and other financial assistance. We are of the view that this is not good enough. If we continue to suppress human rights development, we have no choice than to go back to barbarism which is rooted in insecurity. In Nigeria, for example, the Peoples Democratic Party led government stopped a peaceful demonstration embarked upon by the conference of Nigeria political parties. This is a violation of the right to peaceful assembly and freedom of association. The government cannot feign ignorance in this regard but it shows their approach to statecraft which is rooted in authoritarianism. The consequences of this, is the brutalization of our people through the violence of state power. There is a high scale assassination of political opponents at the slightest disagreement. There is an unending ethnic crisis and conflicts day in day out. This is not the kind of democracy we dreamt of. The people who should constitute political sovereignty are burdened by the abuse of power and policies that do not contribute to their welfare. They are impoverished through policies that tend to enrich the political class at the expense of the governed. The aim of government is to provide a social framework for the actualization of individual happiness and well-being. The opposite is the case in Nigeria because, we lack the vision to tap from that social framework whose target is to alleviate human sufferings and problems. What is the way out?

3.6.3 A DYNAMIC APPROACH TO HUMAN RIGHT AND DEVELOPMENT

Human rights as they exist today in most countries are nothing but rhetorics by governments to score cheap popularity. Although there is a level of compliance by some advanced societies, more needs to be done to actualize the "humanness" which they are aimed at. The situation is worse in Africa and in Nigeria with governments that claim to be democratic. This research is of the view that, a new social framework of human rights ought to be put in place to enhance our development drive. In this connection, we would like to focus on the following fundamental rights:

i) The right to education: Article 26(1) of the United Nations declaration of human rights states that education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.

ii) Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedom. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

iii) Parents have a prior rights to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children **(Omoregbe, 1994:90-91).**

Education is a vehicle for national development and this is why responsible governments attach much importance to it through effective funding. The past and present

governments in Nigeria have not given education the attention it deserves. Government always claims to lack funds for educational development but a look at other sectors and the level of wastage contradicts this claim. Worst of all, is the commercialization of education. In as much as we advocate a private sector participation in education, we should not subscribe to government handing over schools to shylocks whose interest is profit maximization. This is the current trend in Nigeria. Education as a fundamental right should be accessible to our children at a minimum cost not like the kind if increase in petroleum products. As a right, those who cannot be educated either because of the cost or other forms of discrimination, should take a legal redress to enforce their rights. By this, government might sit up and address the problem. Education as a tool of mental liberation is necessary because, it will contribute to social and political liberation. An educated society will be enlightened enough to curtail election fraud and other election malpractices so as to enthrone a responsive and responsible government. This is where human right will make sense to us in Nigeria.

1. **RIGHT TO WORK:** The right to employment is hinged on education. Our educational system seems to be directed against labour. What we mean by this, is that, most of our products are not directed on skill after graduation. This is the cause of unemployment in Nigeria. Those who get employed do not earn a living wage. We advocate for a dynamic approach in our educational policy to accommodate entrepreneur skills to enhance self-employment. This will eliminate social ills and some youths agitations for a better living condition. This will also impact on our development efforts. Ake, (1978:7) supported this position when he stated that, for human rights to make sense in Africa, we have to domesticate them, recreate them in the light of African conditions.

He further stated that if a bill of right is to make sense, it must include among others, a right to work and to a living wage, a right to shelter, to health and to education. That is the least we can strive for if we are ever going to have a society which realizes basic human needs **(I bid).**

Our analysis has focused on the right to education and employment. It does not mean that other rights are not important but, these two form the basic foundation of satisfying our basic necessities of life such as food, clothing and shelter. Take for example, the right to freedom of expression, thought, assembly and association. If one is an illiterate, how can these rights make any sense to him? The greater percentage of our population cannot read or write and this affects their perception of reality. They have no business with what happens in government. Government also likes the state of affairs because, it helps them to manipulate the people better for their own benefits. An educated population is a threat to such manipulations. This is where the western world has excelled. It is also true that the educated class are few and this makes the uneducated class to dominate the political process. The reason for this is that, the educated class lack the financial muscle to fund the kind of election in Nigeria. Most of them cannot boast of registration fee not to talk of campaigns that are capital intensive in Nigeria.

We have seen the need for a new phase of human right in Nigeria. For an effective result of the project we have in mind, it is necessary to give our democracy a human face. How can this be done? We have to search for a foundation. Any search for a foundation presupposes the need for solid grounding. However, if this need should manifest itself regarding just anything, the problem of grounding would never receive a satisfactory

solution because the search would lead to infinite regression. The search for a foundation presupposes a doubt, a disagreement or an argument of an existing reality **(Perelman, 1980:45).**

This research is of the opinion that the phase of human rights we are advocating is realizable under a democracy which we claim to practice. This is a right step. What is expected is to adopt a well structured constitution which will streamline the imbalances in our political structure. There is the need to restructure the country under a true federalism. This is a fundamental step. In the preparation of its constitution, Nigerians should be made to participate in the process so that all the grey areas that cause confusion should be addressed. If this is not done, our realization of the new phase of human rights is likely to fail. Whenever human rights have been crushed, a revolution and violence will set in. Declarations of states of emergency might not solve the problem. What is required is to involve the people in a constructive dialogue to be able to unravel the cause of the dispute. Sharma calls this approach in human rights as **comprehensive humanism.** As the name implies, it is aimed at a genuine concern in the understanding of the totality of human nature which could provide a sound basis for human rights **(Sharma, 1980:111).**

Comprehensive humanism explains why respect for life is necessary for claiming the right to live, why respect for property is the pre-condition of the right to possess property, and why respect for the opinion of others is the presupposition of freedom of thought. It further contends that, moral obligations are to be discharged voluntarily by every normal being, because such behavior, being the flow of creative force of the human self, leads to the integrated development of personality, ultimately, bringing him the highest freedom,

the "freedom of mind". John Dewey calls this, "the basic freedom" **(Sharma, 1980:110).** The freedom of mind is a necessary tool in mental revolution which is a platonic method of attaining reformation in society through justice. This in our view, will facilitate the attainment of a more dynamic phase of human right in Nigeria.

3.7 SUMMARY

The concept of Justice is one whose definition differs among social scientists, theologians and philosophers. Anaximander, a pre-Socratic philosopher was the first to introduce the concept into a philosophical discourse. His analysis of justice was from the point of view of Metaphysics. According to him, the primary stuff of reality is not any of the elements that we already know because these elements are in conflict with each other. This conflict in his view is injustice. For Parmenides a contemporary of Heraclitus, justice is a divine power, an agent of punishment and revenge.

The sophists introduced a moral dimension to justice as it affects human relationship and transaction. Thrasymarchus for instance, conceived justice as the interest of the strong over the weak. What he meant is that justice is a tool put in place by a ruling class in order to achieve their own interest. Some scholars have attributed this view of Thrasymarchus as the foundation of Karl Marx's theory of justice. The position of the sophists' concept of justice drew a sharp reaction from Socrates and by extension Plato who disagreed with their views. Socrates saw justice as a moral virtue which enables human beings to take rational decisions especially as it affects human relations. Plato built on this Socratic view by conceiving justice from the point of view of departmental excellences.

According to him, the soul of man is divided into three parts of rational, spirited and the appetitive. This strict division of the soul corresponds to the three classes in his ideal state of philosopher-king (rational) soldiers (spirited) and artisans (the appetitive). To achieve harmony and stability, each class should confine itself to the duty assigned to it without interference. Any interference is considered as injustice. Plato considered justice as morality, virtue and the bond of societies. The strict application of justice will result in orderly conduct of the affairs of men in the society. The perversion of justice for Plato is responsible for crises, conflicts and societal instability.

As noble and as humane as Plato's presentation of theory of justice appears, it ran into conflict with human rights. The strict division of the society into three classes and the subsequent departmentalization of duties are not in congruence with human nature. Human beings are not mechanical to comply with Plato's stipulation of social stratification and its attendant consequences. This is where his theory of justice is accused of having an autocratic and authoritarian outlook. If the theory is followed to a logical conclusion, its purpose of harmony and stability will not be realized. The theory has the potentials of not only promoting tension and instability, but also the violation of human rights and dignity. As a result of these seeming conflicts, an ontological grounding becomes imperative. The ontological grounding presents justice from a phenomenological perspective in order to eliminate the authoritarian and inflexible character the bane of western metaphysical tradition and humanism.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE EXPOSITION OF THE CONCEPT OF POLITICAL

STABILITY

4.0   INTRODUCTION

Political instability has been a source of concern to man from antiquity. The irony of this phenomenon is that instability appears to be located in man's essential nature. **Unah, (2002b)** affirmed this thesis when he stated that there is a fundamental insecurity embedded in man's ontological structure which snowballs into all forms of instability. He drew inspiration from Martin Heidegger, a famous German ontologist, who analyzed a number of ontological concepts such as guilt, objectless anxiety, anticipatory resoluteness or the Dasein in man, which more or less, points to this fundamental insecurity ingrained in man's physiological chemistry. The search for stability is constrained by the fact that instability is located in man's make-up. Such make up appears to be as complex as man himself.

Before we go on with this discussion, it is necessary to make some basic clarification in respect of the concepts under consideration which of course, are stability and instability. A social and political order is said to be unstable when change or decay is central to its existence. On the other hand, a system is said to be stable when it has attained a minimum stage of calmness and maturity that it cannot easily be shaken. The problem with this definition is that, no society can be said to be stable because all seem to be involved in one crisis or the other. Once an element of crisis is identified then, stability becomes an illusion. The question now is whether, it is possible to attain a social or

political stability when man is the source of the problem and also the propagator of the solution? This indeed, is a philosophical problem. To bring this discussion in line with our theoretical framework, let us rob minds with Plato.

He studied critically two great Pre-Socratic philosophers Heraclitus and Parmenides on the philosophical problems of instability and stability. To say the least, he was influenced by these thinkers. For Heraclitus his theory of change is summarized thus:

i)   Everything is born of strife and

ii)   Everything is in a constant state of flux

(cf Guthrie,1960:45). This theory depicts the inevitability of change in human condition. Change is so real that in his view, one cannot step into the same river twice as both the river and the person must have changed. This change is a process of understanding reality. One underlying conclusion here, is that no matter how a change is resisted or delayed, it must come when the time is ripe. On the other hand, Parmenides a contemporary of Heraclitus, pontificated on the theory of Permanence. For him, motion was impossible and that is why reality is consistent in a single, motionless and unchanging substance (I bid p.47).

Parmenides appears to be the first to reflect on the logic of words. This logic was based on the metaphysical force attached to the verb "to be". He maintained following this trend of thought that what is, is and to change means to become what is not. Based on this thesis, he concluded that change is an illusion of the senses because, it cannot be the object of reality. Plato's theory of forms to a large extent was committed in realization of accommodating the state of flux of Heraclitus and the theory of Permanence of

Parmenides. How did he advance this theory and what is the philosophical base of the theory?

4.1 PLATO'S THEORY OF THE STATE

Plato's conception of the state is contained in some sections of the *Republic*, the manifesto of the academy. The first question he appears to be addressing is what is the nature of the state? In his view, a state exists to promote the interest of its members. An organization is called a state when it is able to achieve this goal. From this point of view, it means that the existence of the state is imperative because it aims at articulating and systematizing those factors that promote human happiness and well-being. This appears to be the reason for the existence of the state. Plato gave credence to this when he said that the formation of a state (city) is due, as I imagine, to this fact, that we are not individually, independent, but have many wants. Thus, it is, then that owing to our many wants, and because each seek the aid of others to supply his various requirements, we gather many associates and helpers into joint dwelling place and give to this joint dwelling the name of state (*Republic*, 1997:50).

From Plato's position, it will appear to us that the emergence of the state is predicated on the basic needs of man and the mechanism of satisfying these needs. These basic needs include food, shelter and clothing which are necessary for human existence. A state is formed when individuals who are gifted in various skills come together to put their talents into use. We need a process of harnessing these skills for productivity and exchange through the division of labour.

Aristotle, Plato's pupil, regarded the state as an association that exist by nature. The association he meant here is different from other associations that exist in human societies. It exits to provide all the needs of man both material, social and religious and offers them the fulfillment not only of living but of living "well" in accordance with those virtues that are particularly human. The state is thus, "all-providing, which is best and which is characteristic of natural ends (Aristotle, 1981:55).

Both Plato and Aristotle see the existence of the state as vital with the overall responsibility of providing the basic needs of its citizens which will translate to their well-being and happiness. The question now is, has the state been able to fulfill these functions? It will appear to us that the answer to this question might be elusive. The reason for this, is that, in the context of the Greek city state otherwise referred as the 'polis' these duties were to some extent realized but in modern states the scenario is different. This picture is what is responsible for the constant conflict and crisis in our societies. As a result of the defect of the state in Plato's epoch in achieving total success, there was also conflict and crisis which threatened the social and political order. He saw the political decadence and bankruptcy of the Athenian democracy and saw the need for a total reconstruction of both the individual and society. This prompted his theory of a perfect (Ideal State).

Plato's central question in political philosophy appears to hinge on what makes a state? Do we say that it is made up of individuals or associations? Basically, a state in the platonic concept is made of individuals or groups united by peculiar bonds and

the project intends to achieve the overall solution towards the crisis of man and society and to enable him attain social and political stability.

4.2   PLATO'S IDEAL STATE

The *Republic* conceived by many as the greatest of Plato's dialogues contains the paradigm of an ideal state. The aim of this state is to make citizens happy. He thought of being invested with supreme power which will save humanity from the crisis of injustice. A philosophical diagnosis of the Athenian society shows to a large extent crisis resulting from poor administration in government leadership and education. His ideal state based on the *Republic* discusses some philosophical problems related to social, ethical and political issues. These issues in his view, constitute solutions to actualize the social aspirations needed for a decent society if well observed.

In book four of the *Republic*, he divided the ideal state into three classes, namely the guardians, the auxillaries or soldiers and the artisans or the common people. This strict division corresponds to the three parts of the soul as postulated in his psychology. The three parts of the soul in his psychology which is seen by some as going beyond the Pythagorean doctrine of the soul classified the soul into the rational, the spirited and the appetitive. The rational part of the soul is dominated by reason, the spirited by courage while the appetitive belongs to man's lower emotions. Both the spirited and the appetitive parts of the soul are to be controlled by reason which will in turn result in harmony and concord in the individual and make him a just man. (*The Republic*, 1997:139-141) The

correspondence between the parts of the soul and the three classes of the society is as follows:

4.2.1 THE GUARDIANS

These are the rulers of the state. The *Republic* tells us that this class of people possess simple and moderate desires which go hand in hand with intellect and right opinion, under the guidance of reasoning. This means that they possess the best natural endowments and the best education (I bid. 127). The best natural endowments and the best education, according to Plato, is predicated on philosophic disposition. A philosophic disposition as the name implies, is the capacity of man to reason. In this context therefore, the guardians who are rulers are philosophers.

Omoregbe (1991) put it this way : the guardians, the rulers, are to be philosophers. They are to undergo a long and rigorous educational programme until they are thirty-five years old before taking up any official assignment. They should neither have private property nor wives of their own, everything will be communally owned. They should live in communities or barracks as soldiers do. The reason for this is to enable them practice communal mode of living. Since they have wives in common, how will their children be identified and trained? In this arrangement, all children belong to the state and they should be taken away from their parents to be trained by the state. The state training and upbringing of the children is to make them dedicated and patriotic to the cause of the society. The wives for the guardians are strictly arranged at the instance of the state and at a particular time. For men guardians, children can only come between the ages of

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twenty-five and thirty-five and for women twenty and forty is recommended. Poverty and riches will not be found in the city since the possession of private property is prohibited. Plato's proposal for the guardians affects one of the oldest institutions; the family, the basic unit of social and economic production. The family and its ties have been abolished. We do not know how a society could be developed when the basic foundation is not there. Also worthy of note, is the abolition of private property. In our modern society private acquisition of private property appears to be a motivation for public office. Public officers acquire wealth and property with ease and nothing seem to stop them, except if they leave office. In developing countries where public morality is at the lowest ebb not even a threat of sanction can disturb them. In spite of the requirement for asset declaration before the assumption of office, the situation seems not to improve. In Nigeria, the various governments have put in place different institutions such as the code of Conduct Bureau and the Independence Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC) all in an effort to check Corruption but they have not yielded the expected result. Plato's vision here is highly impressive because, the craze to acquire and amass wealth at the expense of the state is a recipe for social and political instability.

Based on this observation and its attendant consequences on the health of a society, Plato made a fundamental philosophical demand thus,

> *Unless that it happens either that philosophers acquire the kingly power in states, or that those who are now called kings and potentates be imbued with a sufficient measure of genuine philosophy- that is to say unless political power and philosophy be united in the same person, most of those minds which at present pursue one to the exclusion of the other being peremptorily debarred from the other, there will be no deliverance for the human race* (1997:178).

His proposal made philosophy a fundamental requirement for guardianship or leadership. What is expected of a competent leadership therefore, is a philosophical disposition. He is of the view that, philosophy is built on wisdom and truth and that, any one aspiring for leadership should possess these qualities. Wisdom and truth give one confidence because they are products of reason. If we agree with Plato that only philosophers can govern societies effectively, the question that is likely to be posed is, who are philosophers and what are the characteristics that position them to rule? It might not be easy to give a single answer on who a philosopher is. The reason for this is that at the time Plato made this declaration, philosophy was still a body of knowledge and specialization into different courses had not been effected. Today, philosophy has shed a lot of disciplines to specialization of knowledge. A lot of these disciplines still acknowledge the parental character of philosophy in terms of foundation, scope and validity. Only the method and object of study appear to differentiate them from philosophy.

In Plato's conception, what then is the notion of philosophy? A philosopher is a lover of wisdom. He is one who is ready and willing to taste every kind of knowledge and addresses himself joyfully to his studies with an appetite which never can be satiated (1997:180). In this notion, we find all sorts of people involved in the philosophical enterprise. This makes it mandatory for us to identify genuine philosophers from counterfeit ones. For Plato, genuine philosophers are those who love to see the truth **(Ibid 181).**

The conception of truth here presents another dimension to the problem of our discourse. Truth belongs to the world of Forms and is only apprehended through thought. A genuine philosopher to this end, is one who can make a distinction between knowledge and opinion. Knowledge is stable and consistent but opinion fluctuates and is subject to adjustment. One is called a philosopher when he is able to go beyond the given state of affairs in order to proffer solutions to the problems of man and society. Such a solution to political or social problem does not come from the blues rather, it is a product of mental and intellectual activity. It is ontologically evaluated in terms of examining all possible aspects of the problem. To understand who a genuine philosopher is, we should go beyond the Platonic paradigm which appears to be an elitist position.

In his contribution to this debate, **Ruch (1974:5)** quoting **Walter Odajnyk** stated,

> *True philosophy is an art and a great philosopher is a creative person, an artist, and not only an intellectual involved with dull analysis, induction and deduction. Like the artist, the philosopher describes life and the world and unveils new vistas of thought and experience through his own insight and vision. Only a matter of technique separates the artist from the philosopher.*

Ruch's summary is quite in order because, he provided an insight into a philosophical realm. The foundation of human knowledge has been laid by the enterprise of philosophy. Philosophy has provided a conducive environment for research and expanding the frontiers of human knowledge. This makes possible for all branches of human knowledge to draw inspiration for the benefit of man and society. A true philosopher therefore depicts vision, creativity and is capable of contemplation.

On this issue Ted Benton following Peter Winch declared,

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To be clear about the nature of philosophy, and to be clear about the nature of social studies, amount to the same thing. For any worthwhile study of society must be philosophical in character and any worthwhile philosophy must be concerned with the nature of human society **(Benton, 1977:13).**

This research agrees with Benton because, the study of society elucidates the value and essence of a philosophical research. In such study, the essence of human values which philosophy tries to justify is further consolidated. In doing this, we are able to find answers to many complex questions. For example, why is one system of government preferred to another? What is the justification for punishment? In asking questions such as these, moral values at the centre of society's development are further addressed. Benton also stressed the interaction and relationship between philosophy and other bodies of knowledge and maintained that any philosophical research must be concerned with the nature of human society. In fairness, philosophy has been involved in this aspect right from the revolution of the sophists who shifted emphasis from the primary stuff of the universe to man and society.

The whole of Plato's philosophical activities were centred on the defense of humanism. Such defense embodies human values and his well-being. The defense of humanism is a serious task of a philosopher who not only appreciates the ideal but tries to attain it. A philosopher is a lover of wisdom. If he loves wisdom, it means that its acquisition is of paramount importance in analysis, articulation and synthesis of crucial issues. If this is the case, it means that, wisdom is the model of a philosopher. What then is wisdom? Is it different from knowledge?

Wisdom is not equated with knowledge. A philosopher possesses knowledge but still strives to acquire wisdom. Heraclitus, one of the pre-Socrates is credited with the comment that the learning of many things does not suffice of itself to make a man wise, else certain of his predecessors would have been wise **(cf Wiredu,1980:140)**. The predecessor he is talking about here, is Pythagoras a well known mathematician and philosopher. He did not recognize him as a wise man in spite of his depth of knowledge in the scientific realm. What this means is that, the acquisition of knowledge does not confer wisdom on an individual neither will he be credited with the status of an intellectual. Who then is an intellectual? By being an intellectual, we are not talking about an individual whose mind has become a store house of facts. We have to go beyond this. To this end, Wiredu sees as an intellectual, one who through education has developed the cast of mind that is capable of processing facts and extracting their significance for human life, and whose participation in the affairs of society is thoroughly imbued with the desire to bring the intellect to bear upon human problems, so as to liberalize and humanize and in a word, enrich life **(I bid p.141).**

From this point of view, we could see that wisdom does not exist in a vacuum. Knowledge lays the foundation for wisdom to grow and the possessor uses it to furnish his thought, taking a rational decision and in some cases, making a rational judgment in a dispute. Wisdom at this stage becomes a consolidated knowledge. Plato made such assertion, when he said that wisdom is nothing but humanly oriented knowledge with account (Ibid). A wise man is therefore one, who applies his knowledge in a skillful manner to serve the purpose of not only human transactions but his relations as well. We

have tried to characterise the relation between wisdom and intellectualism. The intellectual has knowledge and appreciates its relevance to the broader needs of society, but he does not necessarily have the skill of ordering personal relations harmoniously (I bid p.142). The wise man on the other hand, is versed and experienced in personal relations and is not confined to a particular branch of knowledge. He is versatile in terms of approaching concrete human problems. There is a common denominator between them; they go beyond mere knowledge of facts. Both the intellectual and the wise man create a necessary role for the philosopher who on his part, seeks to understand and evaluate the principles underlying the reasons for the arrangements of men. Both the philosopher and the wise man are concerned with facts and practice, but the philosopher in his more theoretical moments operates at a more verified level (Ibid). The level we are talking about of the philosopher here might be clouded in abstraction because of his level of cognition but, he is first and foremost, involved in communication of knowledge aimed at improving man and society. In the discharge of this social responsibility, the philosopher has not equated himself to a wise man but, because, he is involved using wisdom as a defensive mechanism is close to a wise man. A wise man in this context, is one who is able to find solutions in the day to day family social and business life, and the philosopher is frequently teased with the alleged incompetence in the down to earth affairs of the world. (Ibid)

This postulation that philosophy has no relevance in practical affairs is not only a misconception, it is also borne out of ignorance. Omoregbe, made this clear when he said, "It is an illusion, indeed a dangerous illusion, to think that philosophical ideas have

no influence on practical life. Philosophical ideas are dynamites, they have powerful influences on peoples lives. The philosophical theories of John Locke, Montesquieu, J.J. Rousseau, Hegel and Karl Marx were among the forces that shaped the western society **(Omoregbe, 2001:1-2). Russell (1961:11)** maintained a similar position when he said that the understanding of an epoch or a nation, must be followed by the understanding of its philosophy because the philosophy of a people does much to determine the circumstances of their lives. Philosophical theories emerged from the problems of societies. These theories did not come on their own. They reflect to a large extent on the problems of man and the solutions proffered. Take for example, the moral decadence in Athens led Socrates to state that the unexamined life is not worth living. This means that, for man to be useful in society, his actions must be reflected upon to give room for values that promoted his happiness. He maintained that virtue is knowledge and ignorance the root of moral evil. Philosophical theories therefore, are the engine of sound moral foundation for development.

Wilhelm Winderlband, according to Momoh, supported this view when he maintained that,

> *The elements of every philosopher's weltanshauung grow out of the problem of reality which are ever the same... but besides this out of the views and ideals of his people and his time; the form and arrangement, however, the connections and valuation which they find in the system are conditioned by his birth and education, his activity and his lot in life, his character and his experience* **(cf Momoh, 1994:10).**

Momoh used this to illustrate the view that, every philosopher is a product of his environment and is always associated with the issues affecting his environment. He

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further stated that every philosopher has a programme, every philosopher has an agenda, every philosopher has a statement. A similar could be said for a nation, a class, a sector and a religion. It is the philosopher who is the intellectual spokesman either for good, or bad, either positively or negatively (13).

With this position, we could see that the philosopher is not an observer in the affairs of his society but an active participant who makes a tremendous contribution to the problems of his society. With this, he is relevant and committed to the development of his society. His views are far-reaching because of his mental disposition and his commitment to excellence. We have argued that philosophy involves the investigation of the first principles of human life- the most fundamental principles, that is, which underlie human life **(Wiredu, 1980:100).** Philosophy does not proceed with the method of the natural sciences. How then does it investigate the problems of human life? The methodology is analysis, generalization and synthesis. In its tasks, concepts are used to explain issues and phenomena. These concepts are so crucial because they constitute a map to understand and clarify issues. A professional philosopher evaluates issues from the roots and this gives him an advantage in the understanding of reality.

On this perspective, Unah stated, that a professional philosopher should first of all have an orientation of "Being" that is, a theory of reality, truth and value **(Unah, 1998:8).** He maintains that an orientation in Being equips the philosopher with the ontological telescope to execute a comprehensive ordering or re-ordering of the experience of the world. From here, he concluded that, the primary task of the philosopher is the provision

of a comprehensive and consistent worldview. An orientation of "Being" is a necessary condition for philosophical development. This orientation is a foundational disposition which provides the philosopher with the necessary skills, tool and perspective in philosophical research.

Philosophizing on its own does not make one a philosopher. One can make an intellectual excursion but still remains unphilosophical. Philosophy is a second order discipline in that, it begins at the point where others stop. What we are saying here, is that, it goes beyond the assumptions which have been adopted as a theoretical framework. In Plato's view, one must go beyond the sense as they are physical, distorted and unstable. For him the ultimate in human knowledge is dependent on the world of forms where true justice exists in its perfect form. Based on this the guardians who have been empowered to rule must have gone through the forms which have equipped them to appreciate the essence of things. The Guardians by this disposition are expected to maintain a high level of stability by the application of reason. This will ensure harmony and concord in society.

4.2.2 THE AUXILLARIES (SOLDIERS)

This is the second class in Plato's ideal state which also corresponds to the second part of the soul, the spirited element. This class is charged with the responsibility of defending the state. The *Republic* tells us that like their guardian counterpart otherwise known as the philosopher-kings, they should not own private property neither are they expected to have wives of their own. What this means is that everything will be communally owned. They should be accommodated in barracks to enable them have total commitment in

performing their role of defending the state from external aggression. Their basic needs are therefore provided by the state. All other arrangements especially marriage prescriptions, whom to marry and at what time is the sole prerogative of the state. Also the time to raise children which are taken away from them and trained by the state is the same. Women were also given the opportunity to undergo military and physical training in order to qualify as auxiliaries. The auxiliaries are to exhibit courage which is up till now a basic characteristic of soldiers while the guardians demonstrate a high sense of reason to administer the affairs of the state.

4.2.3 THE ARTISANS (COMMON PEOPLE)

By Plato's classification, the artisans belong to the third part of the soul (appetitive) which is man's lower emotion or passions. Their major responsibility is to provide the material needs of the state. Unlike the rulers (guardians) and auxiliaries (soldiers) they are not restricted in having private property and wives of their own. This means that the artisans are free from the communal life to which the upper classes are subjected to.

The class distinction is rigid and is to be applied strictly because it is hereditary. In this order, the children of the guardians graduate into the guardian's class, the same for the auxiliaries and the artisans. A child of a guardian who is unable to stand the test of his class should be demoted to the artisan's class. He stipulated that if a child of the artisans shows an exceptional quality, he should be upgraded to the guardian class. Each class should be able to perform the roles assigned to it without interference. In this connection, there will be harmony, order, concord and above all justice. The stability of the state just as in the individual is to be hinged on justice. At this state, each class is expected to

discharge its duties creditably to give justice a firm foundation. But there seems to be a problem with the inability of the artisans to move to the guardian class. This arrangement to us is another form of injustice. We think that justice is attained when there is equal opportunity for all the classes to utilize their productive capacities. This objection is a serious set back to the social stratification of Plato's Ideal State as a means of attaining stability.

We have also observed that the auxiliaries (soldiers) have for obvious reasons abandoned their social responsibility of defending the state and have taken the role of the philosopher-kings. By their training, they are not equipped to rule. It does not mean that they are not capable of ruling if giving the opportunity to do so. But it is better on Plato's recommendation for them to maintain the stability of the state by adhering to their primary responsibility which is the defense of the state from attacks.

4.2.4 EDUCATION

In the Ideal state or Plato's communism, education is necessary in order to attain a high level of leadership traits. The guardians are to undergo a rigorous educational training to attain proficiency in the art of statecraft. Such training will be based on pure mathematics especially in geometry, astronomy, and music. All these branches of knowledge should be brought under dialectics. Dialectics helps the philosopher to attain a sovereign status. As the name implies, a sovereign status brings the philosopher to a zenith of pure philosophy having internalized the world of Forms. This in Plato's view, will bring an end to political instability.

Literature: In the tenth book of the *Republic*, Plato banished poets. The reason for this, is that, they are accused of imitating the gods especially their negative characteristics. This ban affected the works of Homer and Hesiod the exponents of such literary works. Education of children encouraged them to be brave and patriotic to the cause of their native land. There should be a strict censorship over the materials that children could read. This will encourage good moral behavior and sound moral foundation for future life. Such moral upbringing if logically realized, will reduce corruption and embezzlement of public funds. These acts attract death penalty in the ideal state. Atheism is also discouraged. Atheism according to Plato suggested a denial that the universe is controlled by an intelligent being.

The *Laws*, one of the *Dialogues* also recommended that traveling abroad by citizens is prohibited. The state reserves the right to grant such permission to those above the age of forty. There should also be a strict immigration laws especially to foreigners under government control. Immigration laws vary from one country to another because of the social and cultural consequences. But there seems to be some advantages and disadvantages in terms of implementing these laws to the letter.

These programmes outlined by Plato to consolidate his ideal state portray an authoritarian outlook. We then envisage a problem in their implementation. How will the lower class accept the rule of law, based on a totalitarian foundation and at the same time maintain the stability of the state? Plato was of the view that this class of people should be fed

with political and religious myths otherwise called "noble lies" **(Crossman,1959)**. They should be passed in such a way that their emotions should be stimulated and this will in turn aid obedience to the law. By 'noble lie' Plato was talking of propaganda which is a tool of disseminating political information. The philosopher-king represented by the 'dictatorship of the best' must be prepared to use propaganda to maintain the status quo. This will ensure stability and prevent bloodshed.

Propaganda in our view requires a subtle approach so as not to create tension. The tool in our view is that of persuasion but there has to be an element of force before such a policy could sail through. This is true of all totalitarian philosophies. Even in the guise of democracy, totalitarian systems use all sorts of methods including falsehood, intimidation and threats to sell policies and programmes which the majority cannot challenge. In societies with low political consciousness, the scenario is worst, because, some agents are paid and instructed to sell such policies to their people. This is the situation prevalent in Africa which is yet to attain a high level of political education.

4.3   AGENTS OF POLITICAL INSTABILITY

Instability makes complete rehabilitation impossible Oyediran(1996) citing **Chazan, (1996)**. While we accept this position as a philosophical truism, stability does not suggest a sufficient condition for positive development. The reason for this is that, even in authoritarian systems, there could be a level of stability which on close examination does not indicate a serious development. Our thesis in this regard, is that stability is not

enough but effort should be made to enthrone a democratic culture because, there is a great benefit from this type of political arrangement.

Political instability constitutes a set back not only to world peace but also to societal development. The modern world is complicated, diverse and dynamic and shot through with contending tendencies and contradictions. It is the world of the most difficult alternatives, anxieties and hopes. Never before have our homes on earth been exposed to such great political and physical stresses **(Fedoseyev, 1998:45).**

Instability is imperative in any political or social system because it is ingrained in human nature. Also certain agents have made themselves available to foster instability. These factors or agents are religion, culture, politics, economics and law.

4.3.1 RELIGION

The first and fundamental question here is whether there is a relationship or interaction between religion and politics. This question is necessary because there is a consistent school of thought which maintains that religion is part and parcel of politics. In the *Republic*, Plato outlawed Atheism and maintains that the universe is governed by an intelligent being. Before we consider whether religion has any relevance to politics, it is important to understand what religion is and its role in politics and by extension society. The word religion denotes a system of beliefs, rituals and practices or a code of moral conduct involving the recognition by man of a superhuman power which has control over his destiny and which is entitled to obedience, reverence and worship **(Kazaure 1988:4).**

This definition recognizes man's inability to cope with the problems of life without depending on a superior power. Man's recourse to the supernatural shows a need to seek more protection in his day to day activities. Apart from the issue of protection and provision of man's need are there other importance attached to religion as an activity?

Kazaure stipulates that religion provides principles of organising society because it expresses the central belief about proper behaviour on which the continuity of human life depends. The correct use of religion contributes to progress and happiness in a society, when it is incorrectly applied it leads to misery, untold hardship and widespread destruction. This work agrees with this position and solicits for a progressive religious dynamism whose goal is tolerance and accommodation in human society.

Akinola, (1988:109) examines religion from a conceptual framework of Emile Dukheim as,

> *A unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden- beliefs and practices which unite into one single moral community called a church, and all those who adhere to them.*

He also offered a more general definition, quoting **Spiro (1981) that** religion is an institution consisting of culturally patterned interaction with culturally postulated superhuman beings. The underlying assumption here is that religion provides an institutional framework for character and moral upbringing through the vehicle of culture.

This definition appears to miss one thing which is crucial to our study. This object is that religion also is a vehicle of intolerance. It focuses on what religion ought to do and not what it is doing in human society.

Supporting the moral ingredients in religion and its application to politics **Mbon (2003) citing Momoh (1988:238)** maintains that we need religion in politics. His reason is based on the fact that every religion contains within itself and teaches such wholesome virtues as love, morality and honesty. What in this country we call transparency, justice, equity, unity, brotherhood, peace, altruism are essential elements of any religion that can unite a people and guarantee stable political structures and sustainable democracy. They form a firm foundation for political stability and socio-economic development. Indeed the cause of Nigeria's socio-political woes may be traced to lack of an adequate dose of genuine, practical religion in her political and social structures.

Religion is not synonymous with morality but in religion emphasis is made on the need to have moral values. To this end, religion can enhance the moral standard of society in view of its emphasis on moral upbringing of individuals that make up society. In practical terms, this is far from its target. This brings us to the question we raised earlier on whether religion has any relationship with politics. Religion on the face value ought to provide the basic foundation for politics but this is not the case. Religion appears to be incompatible with politics because it lacks the capacity for integration, cohesion and unity. It rather, promotes disharmony, intolerance and the spirit of absolutism which is the basis of political instability.

Conflicts arising from religion as fostered by fanaticism is the behaviour, the character or the ideas of showing very great and often unreasoning keenness for some religious beliefs. In a nutshell, it is a violent and unreasoning religious enthusiasm as well as the inability of religious adherents to harmonise the theoretical and practical aspects of religion **(Balogun, 1988: 55)**. Religious fanaticism is a serious limitation and poses great threat to political stability. It enhances division in a society where there is a multiple religious groups. It promotes mutual suspicion and distrust and can affect productivity.

Fanaticism also manifests in doctrinal issues among religions. This is seen clearly in Christianity where different sects interpret the bible from their vantage positions. Some of these interpretations foster an air of superiority making one sect above the other. This is religious fundamentalism at its best. The doctrine of the chosen people is a product of this exercise. It breads intolerance and gives the impression that some religious groups are superior to others. This trend is the cause of many religious wars and acts of terrorism. A typical case of this can be seen in the middle east between the Israelis and the Arabs. Religious intolerance and fanaticism was given a philosophical perspective by Jim Unah. According to him, the seed of religious intolerance and fanaticism is sown by traditional metaphysical thinking which exists in two main forms **(Unah 1988:284, 1995:65-68, 1997:25-28, 1998:35-37, 2006).**

The two forms of traditional metaphysical thinking are

1. Reduction of all reality to a single substance

2. Focusing attention on an ultimate divine being.

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How do we explain this in terms of traditional metaphysical thinking of what reality is or should be? A typical traditional metaphysical thinking when analyzing an issue, tends to be dogmatic, fixed and fanatical in drawing a conclusion. Any view which does not agree with his own is rejected. This means that he is more concerned with his own perspective, others do not matter. Another thinker of a different ideological stance will equally not agree with him as he also holds on to his own perspective. When we are faced with this kind of problem, what do we find? We begin to hear such utterances as "capitalism is the best political system and socialism is the ideology of poverty" or "Christ is the only way and Islam is a distortion of divine revelation **(Unah 1988:286)**. Unah is of the view that this superior holier than thou disposition, that reality is one and that only that one is recognized by me constitute the major weakness of traditional metaphysical thinking. What are the consequences of such a metaphysical position? It lays a solid foundation for conflicts, hence metaphysical thinking has been responsible for totalitarian tendencies, intolerance, fanaticism and war. **(Unah 1988:286-287,1995,1996,1997,2002a and 2006).**

The greatest threat of this kind of thinking is the suppression of the freedom of the individual. I am free to express my opinion on a given position and at the same time my view is final the other party can go to hell. This is unhealthy especially, when it is within the purview of human behaviour. If we proceed in this manner, we are likely to end up in totalitarianism and above all the destruction of the procedure of thought. In the analysis of consciousness, we always strive towards an object. Epistemologically, we say that thought is object directed. If the metaphysical temper takes control of the way we talk

and reason by trying to absolutize our position on a given issue, it amounts to nothing other than "nihilism". As the name implies nihilism tries to rule out any position which is not within the conceptual scheme of one's philosophical position. From here we could see why religious fanaticism and intolerance constitute a threat to social and political stability .In some parts of the world, it has become a tool for terrorism and an unending war. The bombing of the World Trade Centre in New York in September 2001 could be traced to terrorism as a result of religious fanaticism. The unending war between the Israeli and the Palestinians through suicide bombing are all products of religious fanaticism and intolerance. We could see the role of religion in the promotion of social and political unrest in all parts of the world. Having exposed the danger posed by religious intolerance and fanaticism, what is the way out?

4.3.2 PROPOSED SOLUTION

A critical evaluation of conflicts and crisis arising from religious fanaticism requires a conducive environment to cultivate the spirit of tolerance and peaceful co-existence. We cannot talk of tolerance without a civilized culture of mutual respect and accommodation. This requires a co-operative effort of all and sundry in order to give peace a chance.

Views must be respected even though they do not agree with your position. What your opponent is saying might not make sense immediately but with much reflection, you might come to appreciate the positive dimension of his viewpoint.

We must cultivate tolerance and understanding so as to facilitate the realization of the common objective of building a peaceful, humane, materially and spiritually prosperous society (Alao, 1988:vii). For him, this could be achieved through a positive

understanding by looking at issues from various points of view as this is capable of smoothening communication and keep the common good. The common good as an ideal is given prominence by this work because it has the capacity to enable the individual to be morally sound. If this is translated to the society, peace and happiness will be enhanced. The goal of every religion is the attainment of sound moral values which will in turn reform the society. If we cannot respect each other because of our religious differences and at the same time call on God, how do we expect him to hear us. If we cannot tolerate those we come in contact everyday, how do we claim to have a relationship with God whom we have not seen.? It is easy to advocate for peace and stability but it is not easy to come up with a practical step to the attainment of peace and stability. In trying to achieve this elusive societal goal, Unah recommended a philosophical disposition which promotes tolerance, peaceful co-existence and respect for persons. This concept he refers to as Phenomenological temper.

In this orientation, we are cultured to allow things manifest themselves, the way they are without pre-conceptions **(Unah 2002a:1)**. Put down in a more clarified philosophical view point, the phenomenological attitude is the orientational habit or disposition of allowing anything appear to us in its true essence without our own interpretation into our ready-made artificial conceptual schemes. This attitude requires openness because the world around us is diverse, complex, and multi-dimensional. This makes our understanding and interpretations different. There is also an attempt to make reality a process. The reason for this, is that, when ever we are analyzing our experience, there is an object in view. Put in another way, we do not reason in a vacuum without attaching

something to our object of experience. What this means is that our thought is occupied with some experience, so are other minds. What we are not thinking of could be another persons thought at that point in time. Phenomenology therefore expects us to operate in a cordial atmosphere of "live and let live" a world where freedom of thought exists and allows for equal participation in the analyses of our experience. This culture when it matures and is ingrained in our consciousness will as a matter of fact lay the philosophical foundation not only for religious tolerance but also for peaceful co-existence. This appears to us as a missing link in the attainment of a humane and stable society. Phenomenology thrives on a genuine democratic culture. This is the kind of culture that could tolerate dissenting views and make participation in political affairs encouraging. The absence of this kind of culture is a recipe for disaster and instability. How can we foster and sustain such a culture of phenomenology? Since we are expected to listen to others and not only ourselves, it is imperative that we allow our minds to approach reality naturally without our cultural and social status. We should not allow prejudices, assumptions or presuppositions to cloud our mental framework. We should not say because X did this today, he would do the same tomorrow. As soon as we begin to reason this way, we are likely to make a mistake. Man is a complex being and it might not be easy to make an accurate prediction as far as human behaviour is concerned. This makes it necessary for us to adopt an attitude of openness (phenomenological orientation) in social and political affairs.

4.3.3 CULTURE

Culture although desirable in organized human societies, presents some problems especially in a multi-racial environment. Our major task here is to examine what we

mean by culture before looking at its role in societal stability. In a simple illustration, culture can be said to be the way of life of a people. This way of life needs to be qualified in other to make meaning of what the concept is all about. Among political scientists, culture refers to a people's psychological orientation. They extended this orientation to political culture which is the general "pattern of orientations" to political objects such as parties, government and the constitution expressed in beliefs, symbols and values **(Heywood, 2000:216)**. One can understand the position of political scientists as they seem to be concerned with the cultural aspects of politics. Depending on how a particular society takes culture in relation to political activities, we think that values which a society cherishes have overall significance in their political culture. Taylor (1871) in his definition of the anthropological concept of culture observed that culture or civilization taken in its wide ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, arts, norms, morals, laws, customs and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society. There is an attempt to equate culture with civilization. His reason for this was based on the assumption that civilization depicts an advancement in material, social and mental cultures of the people at each period in historical development. Each time a particular group of people advances their knowledge as a way of improving their social condition, that is seen as civilization. To this end, a people's concept of culture or civilization is determined by the values of that society and their worldview **(Madubuike 2003: 1-2)**.

Culture can also mean a set of rules which enables a man to live, interact, learn and develop his physical capabilities and adjust to a new environment. Quoting Hammond

(1975) Madubuike, stated that culture "refers to that element in human behaviour which enables human beings to make the most of his physical capabilities and adapt to different environment without highly specialized biological equipment" **(Ibid p.2).** What Madubuike is trying to bring out here is that culture is a product of humanism that which came out through reasoning, based on observation and experience of the physical world. In a multi-ethnic society, culture is seen from the point of view of a social heritage of a group of people and their off-springs learnt through socialization. In this connection, one culture contrasted with the other generally comprises the selective ways of thinking, feeling, acting and communication used by people of one group and ethnicity. This distinguishes their way of life from that of other ethnic groups.

An example of what we are saying here, could be found in Nigeria where many ethnic groups exist with diverse cultural characteristics such as rules, norms, arts, belief, language and value systems. Each of these cultures is distinct and different **(Ibid p. 2).** **Malinnowski (1973),**evaluated culture from the point of view of human nature. According to him, institutions are established for the purpose of expressing man's nature. The motivation behind the individual's participation in a cultural system consist largely in ambition, self-interest, and the like. For him custom is not rooted in a process of learning at all but is grounded in innate or natural tendencies of the human mind. He speaks of "a natural acquisitive tendency" in man, "a love of accumulation for his own sake" "a deep desire to possess" a love of give and take for his own sake and a fundamental human impulse to display, share and to bestow. His inborn tendencies or impulses such as these are the bases of a good deal of cultural behaviour.

Human nature appears so strong in man's behavior. He seems to portray two aspects of his natural self and his artificial character. His natural self is the authentic quality which he displays as his true nature while the artificial character is used as a cover. That is why we find it difficult to believe that X has done this or that. When we hear that X has done P we are taken aback. This kind of behavior is mostly seen in political culture.

Culture from a sociological perspective denotes a shared way of life among the members of a society. It is an agreement among a society's members about appropriate behavior, values, history, heritage and rituals that should be respected and observed **(Neubeck, 1996,Makinde 2007)**.

For the effective organization of society shared values are necessary because these values regulate the behavior of members of such society. The question here is who decides what these values are and who roles out the armoury for their enforcement?

Marx and Engels made their views known here when they postulated that the ideas of a ruling class are in every epoch are the ruling ideas that is, the class which is the ruling material force of a society is at the same time its ruling intellectual force **(Marx and Engels, 1976:67)**. They maintained that those who control the production of material wealth in a society also control the production of knowledge, system of ideas (ideology) and insight and in this way, control the production of an entire way of life. Thus, a society is highly likely to create a culture that justifies, reinforces and reproduces the privileges, advantages and power of its ruling class.

Marx and Engels (1976) citing Gramci (1971) later took an intellectual excursion into this position and came up with what they called "cultural hegemony". In their view, the ideas and values of the dominant members of a society are diffused throughout society's institutions and imposed on less powerful members. Since the dominant members of a society enjoy privileged access to its institution as well as the media, they are in a position to promote that support and legitimize their dominant position. That position also enables them to tolerate only those dissenting viewpoints that do not fundamentally challenge the existing order and to deal with the opposing views.

From this point of view, culture could then be a powerful influence on our behavior by restricting our actions and thoughts within safe range that do not seriously undermine the existing order.

These views so far constitute a threat to the individual and the society at large. Is it just for the owners of the means of production and wealth in society to also control culture? If this is the case the basis that culture denotes the values which members of the society share in common might create some problems. Is value relative or is there a universal conception of value? Are those that control wealth in society above society and what could be done to put a check on their excesses? These philosophical questions which might not have an immediate answer show the degree of intolerance and conflict which culture exhibits in human society.

Following the negative effects which culture has on the development of a society, Wilmot (1979) states that, 'Culture is the total self expression of a people, through which a people reflect on its destiny as a people. By thus reflecting on itself, by becoming aware of its achievements and failures, a people can chart a course of action based on a realistic consciousness of its own strength. Genuine culture he maintains, is a culture devoted to the elimination of colonial domination, is culture rooted in the social condition of the people. This is a culture of liberation **(Wilmot, 1979:186).** Culture is not something static but a dynamic phenomenon. If this is the case, it should be able to have the capacity for transformation to meet changing social circumstances. It is in this connection that it could be used as an instrument of understanding especially in conflict resolution. Any culture which lacks this philosophical foundation is doomed to failure.

Coxall (1973) made this clear when he stated that each country has over time developed a political culture. The concept of political culture denotes a cluster of distinctive values, beliefs and attitudes. The shaping force of specific patterns of institutions, traditions and beliefs on political actions cannot be ignored.

For such values to make much impact individuals should be encouraged to be open-minded in order to imbibe tolerance and understanding among their groups. This will in turn foster co-operation, harmony and peaceful atmosphere, and in this type of culture, crisis which sometimes result in war is a welcome development. Such a culture does not encourage peace which is a necessary condition for stability.

Wiredu (1980) identified authoritarianism as the bane of our traditional society. According to him, any human arrangement is authoritarian, if it entails any person being made to suffer or do something against his will, or if it leads to any person being made to suffer or do something against his will, or if it leads to any person being hindered in the development of his own will. This trait is universal in all cultures. Our view does not say that societies will not have constituted authorities but we are of the view that authoritarian traits should not be allowed to obstruct individual liberty and freedom. Cultures that emphasize the suppression of human liberty and freedom need social transformation, this will in turn promote peace and stability.

In this connection, **Coxall (1973)** quoting F.H. Bradley states that what we call an individual man is what he is, because of and by virtue of community... The individual is what he is born and an educated social being and a member of an individual social organism. If we take this world away we take him away. By his education (formal and informal) in family, church, club and workplace, a person is initiated into a political culture. In this process, he learns modes of political attitudes, internalizing them so that they are able to form guides to his own actions. Our actions to some extent contribute to negative or positive development of society. That is why the kind of education we give our youths matters a lot. In this connection we should give them education not indoctrination.

Education gives the individual the ability to make deliberate rational choices while indoctrination moulds the mind of the individual to built-in choices **(Wiredu, 1980:3-4).**

What this portends is that an indoctrinated mind even though it makes a choice may lack confidence which that choice demands. This is different from an educated mind which has a solid foundation in terms of freedom to choose. We highly embrace an education that will make issues open to critical minds so that problems will be solved in an environment where the mind confronts such. This is the kind of thing John Dewey was talking about when he saw education as an instrument of solving human problems. This in our view promotes liberation through an open mind for peace and tolerance.

4.3 .4 POLITICS

Politics in its broadest sense, is the activity through which people make, preserve and amend the general rules under which they live **(Haywood, 2000:33)**. The making of rules, presentation and amendment requires patterns of interaction which, also raises conflict. In this exercise, opinions vary so also are wants, competing needs and opposing interests, which bring about disagreement. To this end, politics seeks for ways and means to ensure that these rules are implemented and upheld through co-operation. Another view of politics, sees it as a process of conflict resolution because differing views are harmonized through resolution. The question now is, can politics resolve conflict bearing in mind that such conflict arises out of diverse interests?

Man is always confronted with the problem of diversity and scarce resources. How should these resources be controlled, who controls them to ensure equitable distribution? These are questions addressed by politics.

Albert Einstein was once asked at a meeting in Princeton: "Dr. Einstein; why is it that when the mind of man has stretched so far as to discover the structure of the atom we have been unable to devise the political means to keep the atom from destroying us?" He replied, "That is simple, my friend, it is because politics is more difficult than physics" political science like economics has many brilliant names on its roaster- Aristotle, Marcus Aurelius, Machiavelli and Karl Marx. Its large general theories, however, again as in economics lack adequate verification. The study has been a curious amalgam of philosophy, history, polemics, brilliant prose, common sense and primitive psychological assumptions. Only lately, has there been added a good deal of hard-headed observation, and the beginning of some verification theory. Its main focus appears to be who gets what, when, and how (**Heywood, 2003:34 citing Clark, 1955).**

In a nutshell, politics deals with human behaviour which is complex and unpredictable. This is different from atom and its structure. Man lives in a complex environment with harsh political realities. Confronted with such complexity, he tries to reach a level of compromise through co-operation in order to achieve peace. Such a study therefore, involves a complicated procedure because, he is dealing with man who in the words of Protagoras "The measure of all things." Politics to this end, could breed crisis, conflict and intolerance.

Einstein also raises the question of who controls what and how? The answer here lies in the effort to relate politics to power. Politics can be understood from the following:

(i) Government and the activities of the state. To talk of politics in this sense, is to talk of government. The state becomes the instrument of realizing government set goals and objectives. The problems in the achievement of these goals are entirely a different ball game.

(ii) Politics could be described as a public activity because it is associated with the conduct and management of the society. This view is Aristotelian in origin because for him, human beings can find fulfillment and live the good life within a political community.

(iii) Another way to understand politics is from the point of view of conflict resolution. In a conflict situation, we employ not only negotiation and conciliation but also through compromise. Evidence has shown that little is achieved through force and naked power.

(iv) Politics is linked with production, distribution and the use of resources in the course of social existence. This is where power comes in. Power is central to politics because it makes control possible.

Miller (1976) defined politics as power structured relationships and arrangements whereby one group of persons is controlled by another. Power could destroy an existing political arrangement if it is not checked. This view prompted Baron Montesqiueu to posit that "Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely". This is the reality of the human situation. A ruling class can use power to influence not only the values of their society but also their thought. This could be dangerous and this is where power could be a source of political instability.

In the opinion of Bernanrd Dauenhaver *(1976)*, "The realm of politics always involves the old, politics is the institution of a world on the ground of both the earth and earlier worlds. It is a projection rooted in a preservation. It is the working of a people's destiny which is cast before it by its heritage (p. 638). It is true that people can realize their collective destiny through politics, it is also true that a people can destroy their collective destiny through politics. To this end it becomes necessary to ground political leadership on those who have the moral principle to do so.

Plato had a similar problem and came up with the philosopher-kings as rulers in his ideal state. He saw the rule of the best as a necessary condition for stability because such a ruler is a just man, a man of wisdom, a man who has understood the world of Forms. A man of wisdom should be above board in dispensing justice. Reason appears to be the instrument of his intellectual transformation. We agree in the rule of the best because, we are of the view that such people are in possession of philosophical disposition to rule effectively. But we also caution against dictatorship which is likely to be the outcome of such proposals. To curb this likely trend there should be checks and balances through the vehicle of power distribution.

Politics has become so attractive especially in developing countries. The reason for this is that it is a place where all sorts of people without the skills necessary for its operation come and reap benefits of unquantifiable proportion. What is required is for one to be connected to those at the corridors of power. The moment they find themselves there

service which ought to be the motive for political power turns to corruption. The trend is a major setback in the attainment of political stability. To show the level of corruption and its effects on development, the World Bank observed in its (1991; 131-132) report,

> *Corruption weakens government's ability to carry out its functions efficiently. Bribery, nepotism and venality can cripple administration and dilute equity from the provision of government services and thus undermine social cohesiveness.*

The programmes of the World Bank the world over and especially in developing countries such as Nigeria have been unsuccessful because such programmes are distorted by inefficiency, ineptitude, and lack of commitment and corruption of public officers. This appears to be responsible for the high debt profile in developing countries. Instead of improving the standard of living of the people they use their resources to service debts. They go ahead also to acquire more loans and these funds are usually siphoned to foreign accounts thereby making the people more impoverished. This appears to be a major attraction in acquiring political power. In Africa, it does not matter whether it is a military or a civilian government. Their mode of operation is basically the same. The easiest way to foster corruption is through contract awards whose figures are inflated and do not reflect the immediate basic needs of their people. Political instability brought about by corruption and inefficiency could be reduced through a more humanistic rational society. As the name implies, Rationality would, it is held, lead to a more desirable, a softer, more prosperous, and more egalitarian society. Rationality involves the understanding of society (**Vaizey, 1971:212-213**).

Our observation in the foregoing, is that, politics promotes corruption and by extension instability. To reduce this trend, rationality becomes an instrument of evaluating actions in the political landscape. It becomes a paradigm for values and benefits for political decisions. This will in turn reduce the proliferation of persons who do not possess the necessary skills in the affairs of a sound political culture. A sound political culture should be able to provide an enabling environment for all practitioners to show their stuff. If this is done, the people who constitute the mechanism of electing worthy leaders would be able to achieve their goals and aspirations.

Stability is necessary because without it there will be no peace. An atmosphere of peace enhances human liberty. In the opinion of **Nnoli, (1994)** peace cannot be sustained without democracy which ensures the full liberation of the creative energies of individuals and groups in all facets of the life of the society. Such a liberation presupposes the enjoyment of certain rights such as the rights to work, food, education, health services, participation in the decision-making process, freedom of speech and peaceful assembly. He maintains that, when these rights are denied, it makes the individual to withdraw his support from government authority, there is no basis for patriotism, tolerance, trust and loyalty to government.

Political stability which encourages development is attained when the individual has a sense of belonging through active participation in the political process. When a government is insensitive to the wishes and aspirations of its people, it leads to chaos and sometimes civil disobedience. When such a situation is the case, it could lead to other

forms of socio-political instability and a kind of armed resistance and of course, a civil war. This has happened in many parts of Africa such as Liberia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan and Cote de Voire. In these countries, there has been a persistent class struggle that the people are always in pains in terms of power struggle. A sound political culture increases the worth of the individual, his self confidence, and above all, his disposition to government programmes and policies and this, will in turn, foster stability.

4.3.5 LAWS

Laws through government policies and programmes constitute a major source of political stability. This does not mean that laws are not required for an orderly society. Laws are necessary because they constitute the instruments of social control. The philosophical basis on whether law is necessary in human society could be traced to the classical period. Thrasymachus described justice as the interest of the strong over the weak (Plato, 1997:15). He maintained that in every society, the superior strength resides in the ruling body. Each government has its laws framed to suit its own interests and gives the impression that such laws are for the benefits of the governed. A deviation from such laws attracts punishment. Thrasymarchus' position, if pushed to a logical conclusion would amount to the doctrine of might is right which is unhealthy for the necessity of law.

Plato in the same *Republic,* postulated an ideal society where positive laws are not required. In such society, the law of Reason is predominant. The ideal state therefore, is one where the three parts of the soul corresponding to the three classes work in

compliance to maintain harmony and stability. Plato was interested in the ideal law which he saw as an expression of reason. In his old age, when he wrote *The laws*, he discovered that, the ideal state was impossible and therefore, recognized the need to introduce positive laws to govern society. His view was based on the fact that, men are not perfectly rational as stipulated in the *Republic* and so, positive laws are important to regulate human conduct **(Barker, 1970:340-341).**

Karl Marx (1818-1883) appears to have given credence to the position of Thrasymachus that law is as an instrument of oppression by the ruling class in any society. He comprehended the law as exploitative tool used by the ruling class to maintain the status quo and to further their capitalist interest. This is the philosophical foundation of the class struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat.

From the foregoing, we could make the following deductions.

i)   Law is necessary for social and political stability.

ii)   Some laws are unjust and provide a basis for social and political instability. Since the situation is like this, what could be done to mitigate the conflict situation of unjust laws? What do we refer to as an unjust law? Is such law compatible with the expectation of society? These questions are necessary because they elicit the problems of the philosophy of law. Laws are said to be unjust when they go against justice and by extension humanity. That a law goes against humanity shows the distortion in the attainment of justice. What is expected here is an overhaul or revision so as to align such law to the province if justice. **Williams and Henry (1969:189)** made this clear, when they stated that, the legal order is not identical with right, it sometimes goes counter to it,

in such a case, justice requires man to reform or overthrow the legal order, for man ought to be just.

A society will be peaceful and stable when laws are made to reflect the wishes and aspirations of the people. The principle of the rule of law must be pursued through a fearless and independent judiciary. This will promote harmony, concord, stability and above all development.

4.4 PHILOSOPHY AND LEADERSHIP

Leadership for Plato was crucial because it provided a philosophical foundation for social and political stability. Leadership is a skill which requires a philosophical disposition. Such disposition requires vision, courage and an unbounded creative imagination. He grounded this disposition thus,

> *Unless it happens that either philosophers acquire the kingly power in states, or that those who are now called kings and potentates be imbued with a sufficient measure of genuine philosophy- that is to say, unless political power and philosophy be united in the same person, most of those minds which at present pursue one to the exclusion of the other being peremptorily debarred from either there will be no deliverance for the human race* (**Plato, 1997:178**).

Plato's position, is that, leadership requires some skills which are not evenly distributed in men. A leader with a philosophic disposition should be able to appreciate the human essence which in turn will translate to values to stabilize a society. From this viewpoint, are we to entrust our future and destiny into the hands of incompetent people? This is a crucial question because some who parade as leaders today lack the basic requirement of leadership. From Plato's position, also, we understand that there are genuine philosophers

and counterfeit philosophers just as there are genuine leaders. A genuine philosopher is one who sees a problem in its broad dimension or as a part of a larger scheme of things. To this end, he faces a particular situation or circumstance calmly and reflectively, with poise and composure. The philosophical disposition expected of a leader is critical, open-minded, tolerant and a willingness to examine all sides of an issue. When a policy goes through such a perspective conflict will be minimal. To this end, philosophy has both a moderating and stabilizing force in human cognition and a leader who lacks these qualities is not likely to contend with the realities of political power.

In order to appreciate the problems posed by lack of qualitative leadership we need to go beyond Plato's paradigm. This analysis will require us to examine some modern theories of leadership and see whether a leader could make a difference in the act of governance. An argument has been fostered that advanced societies attained their current position because of qualitative and positive leadership. This trend therefore, is critical to human civilization and development, **Olurode (2001)** inspired by the position of the dictionary of the social sciences (1964) states,

> *Leadership as a social phenomenon denotes the occupancy of a status and the active performance of a role that mobilizes more or less organized collective and voluntary effort towards the attainment of shared goals and objectives.*

Leadership, its goals and essence should be based on the philosophy of the society. Such philosophy must also be compatible with the values and norms of the society. A leader no matter his vision and its strategic nature whose goals run counter to the wishes and aspirations of his people is not likely to succeed. A leader should not pursue an agenda

inimical to the shared values within his society. This position is further backed by **Olugbada (1987:239).**

A leader establishes the goals, purposes or objectives and collectively, creates the structures through which the purposes of the collectivity are fulfilled and maintains or enhances those structures. Leaders are supposed to co-ordinate, control, direct, guide or mobilize the efforts of others.

The position above stipulates that societies have their cherished values. The leader is therefore, expected to provide the enabling environment of those desired goals for all and sundry. Leadership has meaning only in a social context which is underlined by power, trust and defined goals. A leader is expected to have the political will to mobilize resources both human and material to achieve sustained goals of the people. A genuine leader enjoys the trust of the followership but, when this trust is betrayed, the leader is likely to lose legitimacy and stands the risk of being unpopular and cannot function effectively.

Olusanya, (2002:3) describes positive leadership thus,

> *Positive leadership involves influencing people and institutions towards well defined goals which contributes to the betterment or greater well-being of society and is characterised by imagination, creativity, discipline, courage and integrity.*

Olusanya enumerated some qualities of positive leadership such as imagination, creativity, integrity, discipline and courage. A good leader should exhibit all or some of these qualities to attract a high level of confidence. A genuine leader should quit the stage when he cannot command respect from his subjects. This is where the advanced societies

have shown their level of cultural sophistication. The governor of New Jersey James Mc Greevey a husband and father of two children announced his resignation from office because he is a gay and has been involved in homosexual affairs. This was reported in U.S.A Today August 13, 2004. His action though surprising to many political analysts, demonstrated a high sense of courage, integrity and accountability. He may not have been forced to do so. This is leadership per excellence and needs commendation.

Obafemi Awolowo (1947:63-64) expressed a similar view when he stated that, society should be ruled by the most enlightened, educationally qualified person, 'a man of proven merit, ability, experience and moral discipline. To rule is his destiny, his natural rights and heritage. He maintained that the inability of Nigeria to allow the rotation of leadership is the cause of political instability and this affects efficiency and progress. While we agree with the position, we do not accept that to rule is the destiny, natural right and heritage of those who are entrusted with political leadership. This view in its logical conclusion goes back to the Hobbesian theory of surrendering our rights to the Leviathan to decide for us what is wrong, right, moral and immoral. Unless adequate arrangements are put in place subject to the level of enlightenment of the society, it could lead to another level of instability.

Oluleye (1985:8) enumerated some essential traits in a leader such as decision-making, courage, will power, charisma, management of men and women, knowledge, moderate living, fitness, tact and diplomacy and honesty. Chukwudifu Oputa expects a leader to possess imaginativeness, firmness of character, clear conscience, disciplined personal life

and stewardship. **(cf Fafowora et al 1995:8-10)** From what has been enumerated here, leadership demands a people-oriented personality. He did not come into office through electoral fraud or one who is imposed like the military. He should be one who is able to use his creative imagination to harness resources for human development. He is not anti-people but through people oriented programmes enjoy the confidence of his people.

Dimkpa (1997:77) drawing inspiration from **Ajayi (1996)** defines leadership as directing the actions of others, producing results through the efforts and co-operation of others. These could be achieved through persuasion or inducement. He identified leadership therefore, from the point of view of authority and influence.

Dimkpa (1997:78) citing Senge (1980) expressed the need for leaders to create a vision. "A true leader creates a vision, communicates that vision in such a way that others will make a commitment to it, maintains the course when obstacles arise, and designs the organizational structure to focus the efforts of employees towards accomplishing the vision". We have so far seen positions, conceptions and opinions of scholars of what constitutes leadership. We have also seen that leadership makes sense when there is a good follower- ship. This makes the philosophy of leadership so complex because man is at the centre of its success or failure. If a group of people or a society decides to give an opportunity to somebody to lead for the realization of an objective or goal, we believe that such person should make a difference through his own insight and vision in line with the wishes of the people. In this case guidance and inspiration, the capacity to mobilize others through moral authority or ideological insight is imperative **(Heywood, 2000:136).**

The emphasis this research is focusing on is the cultural aspect of leadership. This is where Africa and indeed Nigeria is yet to find her bearing. The advanced democracies such as USA, Britain, France, India have a culture of patriotism, accountability and integrity towards the people they are serving. In Africa and Nigeria in particular, there appears to be a constant destruction of leadership content. **Anikpo (2001:48)** blames the present poor state of leadership in Nigeria on "the collapse of cultural concomitants of leadership within traditional African societies due to the onslaught of modern values and norms". **Falola (1990: 161)** has maintained this position that the quality of leadership in Nigeria "is poor". These two positions are inspired by what **Achebe (1983)** stated that the problem of Nigeria is that of leadership. Part of the problem is the view that only a section of the country could provide leadership for the country. Added to this is the fact that only the military serving or retired could provide a leadership suited for the unity of the country. These positions are not only false but also misleading. This research does not agree that political power in Nigeria is hereditary. **Unah (2002 b:44)** made this clearer when he stated that,

> *The right of command in the province of politics is not divinely invested, not by reason of any radical autonomy but by total immersion in or involvement with political inventiveness or creativity one leads and others follow, not because the former is appointed by God or that he is radically autonomous but because he is a political genius, a virtuoso who has made an accurate appraisal of the human condition and resolutely decides to recast, by the doing of deeds, the collective destiny of his people.*

This view was supported by **Dauenhauer (1976:632)** when he argued that, a man is entitled to lead not because of any pre-political arrangement but by reason of his political

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virtuosity. What legitimizes his right of command is not that he selfishly exploits the weakness and cowardice of his people but that he creates an adequate environment for human projects of all sorts. In Nigeria, leadership seems to have been made a birthright. This accounts for the reason of supporting them even when there is evidence of unpopularity and ineffectiveness. This trend is not philosophically healthy, it is a replica of the doctrine of facist leadership principle' which holds that there is a single, supreme leader who alone is capable of leading the masses to their destiny, a theory derived from **Friedrich Nietzche's (1944)** notion of 'superman' **(Heywood, 2000:137).**

The philosophy of leadership in Nigeria should reflect the moral principles expected of a leader in the discharge of his duties. Bearing that in mind leaders are subjected to a free and credible electoral process. Such leaders when they emerge, would be guided by those moral principles which will sustain society. By such disposition, leaders are held accountable by those that elected them. Such leaders will embrace a culture of integrity, honesty, tolerance and accommodation. They should pursue policies which will emanate from the real people they came to serve. This paradigm is not a perfect situation because it exists in some advanced democracies. The end result is political and social stability.

4.5   OBJECTIONS TO PLATO'S IDEAL STATE

Plato emerged when the Greek city states witnessed a period of social and political upheaval. **Crossman (1959:16-17)** described that period as a 'transitional epoch'. His view on this line of thought made Plato a philosopher of transition whose theories were basically geared to a reformation of society. For many decades, the philosopher has been

seen as an 'academic', a dreamer or thinker removed from the petty conflicts of the everyday world (I bid). He maintained that although Plato fitted well in this description, his idealist outlook, thwarted in action, a revolutionary reformer who could find no political basis for his reforms. This work does not agree that Plato had no political basis for his reforms. More than anything else, he was a metaphysician with a capacity to project into a realm of reality other than the one given to us in experience. He was a system builder who could not operate without a basis. Our position here is that he has a base and Crossman could not convince us as to what he means by a political base.

What this position tells us is that some of the objections to Plato's political philosophy which is based on the theory of Forms appears not to have evaluated this theory as a basis for his social and political reforms. Interestingly too, some of the objections demonstrated a high level of positive impact as a way out of a bankrupt society while some are entirely destructive. Just as metaphysics suffered a lot in the hands of logical positivism and other philosophical persuasions, Plato had a similar bashing in various philosophical schools. Some of the views against and for him will be considered with a view to showing their impact in philosophical scholarship.

4.5.1 ARISTOTLE (384-322BC) and others.

He studied under Plato's academy. He parted ways with the institute at Plato's death. Despite the philosophical influence of his master Plato, he had cause to criticize his master's doctrines. His major criticism was directed on his metaphysics which was based on his theory of Forms. The theory of Forms in a nutshell, stipulates that the physical

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universe is only an imperfect reflection or a shadow. It is always in motion. The world of Forms or ideas or the intelligible world is the ideal world and everything is in perfect form. These Forms according to him are the universal ideas of things, the essences of things or the real nature of things **(Omoregbe, 1996: 139).**

The Forms exist as ontological entities independent of things and the human mind. The world of Forms was given primacy in Plato's metaphysics because it reflected perfection, stability in terms of justice, goodness, beauty. Aristotle is in agreement with Plato that the objects of true knowledge are the essences of things but these are not separate entities existing independently from those things which constitute their essences. By trying to explain the unity underlying the multiplicity of things, he fell into the error of increasing the multiplicity of things by postulating another world.

The multiplicity of entities and the subsequent postulation of another world will have no end and Aristotle sees no need for this exercise. As a scientist, he was concerned with things he could experience and the world of Forms cannot be accommodated within his own metaphysical framework. Another defect of his theory of Forms in the opinion of Aristotle, is that, it is incapable of explaining motion in this physical universe. Since the Forms are motionless and changeless it then means that, they are only applicable when we are talking of another world different from the world we are familiar with. The problem between Plato and Aristotle in this regard is that while Plato was a rationalist, Aristotle was a Scientist trained in biology as against Plato's background in Mathematics.

Aristotle demonstrated his seriousness in criticizing the theory of Forms of Plato by offering his own theory of Matter and Form. For him every material being is made up of matter and Form. By form he means what makes a thing what it is. Matter on the other hand, is the stuff which something is made. Matter is therefore, expressed through form. For example, when matter receives any form such as table, it becomes that object, in this case a table. If it receives the form of a bed, it becomes a bed. What we understand here is that matter assumes any form that it is expected to fall into. This confirms that matter makes meaning only through form. This is Aristotle's metaphysics which avoided the Platonic dualism of the physical and the spiritual worlds. The question here is, is it not the spiritual (soul) element that shapes matter? If this position is conceded then Aristotle's claim to have resolved metaphysical dualism becomes an exercise in futility. Metaphysical problems are perennial and any attempt to resolve them may raise some other problems.

Another area of criticism of Plato by Aristotle is in the ideal state especially his proposal that wives should be held in common. The holding of wives in common is the basis of Plato's communism. The practice of communism demands that the guardians be excluded from the possession of private property. Children are the property of the state and not their parents. Aristotle (1983) presented three reasons for the rejection of this proposal. These reasons are as follows:

(a)   His arguments fail to justify the purpose for which he claims the necessity of such proposal.

(b) The end which he says the state should have in the form described in the Republic is unworkable.

(c) It is nowhere laid down in what other sense it is to be understood.

He argues that the unity which this proposal is aimed at achieving falls short of a state. Instead of a unity he advocates a plurality of men with different inclinations. The reason for this according to him is that, man is a political animal who should be allowed to manifest his political and social instincts. Such expressions are not obtainable in Plato's Republic. Plato seems to have realized this when he wrote the Laws in his older age. The ideal state in the *Republic* could not be realized so, he proposed in the *Laws* a city to be ruled by laws. Here, he took into consideration the nature of men in conforming with the law of reason instead of practical state legislation.

An objection close to this is given by **G.W.F Hegel (1952).** According to him, Plato aspired to a philosophical system as depicted in the *Republic* with the aim of attaining the ideal. Hegel admired Plato's aspirations but faults his effort for its shortcomings. In his view, the *Republic* gives us an ideal for the constitution of the state, but the ideal remains according to Hegel, merely an ideal – "a chimera or a "utopia". It fails to be "self producing" to become a concrete |idea", in Hegelian words, the Platonic ideal is too "abstract" because it falls short of man's requirements. The true deal is not what ought to be real, but what is real, and the only real; if an ideal is held to be too good to exist, there must be some fault in the ideal itself, for which reality is too good.

For him, Plato goes astray when he tries to solve Socrates problem of the relation between subjective morality and the state by suppressing individuality. Plato's philosophy in his view remained too abstract when he excluded from the guardians in the ideal state the opportunities for private property from family life, and for personal passion in politics. A fully developed and tenable political philosophy in his view, must meet the requirements of "recognizing" the individual and "combining him with the idea" (p.101). Both Aristotle and Hegel built formidable metaphysical systems and so their objections to Platonism have some positive aspects. Such objections contain some elements of modification and improvements for philosophical development. Hegel, for instance, accused Plato of being too abstract but I do not know whether Hegel is not more abstract than Plato especially his theory of the absolute spirit. Hegel's idealism appears to be more incomprehensible. Both of them are great idealists.

With **Crossman (1959)** we begin to see the destructive aspect of the objection raised against Platonism. According to him, Plato's philosophy is the most savage and the most profound attack upon liberal ideas which history can show. It denies every axiom of progressive thought and challenges its fondest ideals. Equality, freedom, self-government all are condemned as illusions which can be held only by idealists whose sympathies are stronger than their sense. The true idealist, in Plato's view, will see men as they are, observe their radical inequalities, and give to the many not self-government but security, not freedom but prosperity, not knowledge but the 'noble' lie. The perfect state is not a democracy of rational equals, but an aristocracy in which a hereditary caste of cultured gentlemen care with paternal solicitude for the toiling masses (p.92).

He maintained that Plato hated democracy and accepted dictatorship of the best based on his idealistic outlook. As a famous philosopher, he was rarely condemned outright as a reactionary resolutely opposed to every principle of the liberal creed. Instead, he was elevated to a higher rank, and became an idealist, remote from practical life, dreaming a transcendent city of God **(Ibid p. 93)**. He concluded his objection by taking a look at the concept of dictatorship which characterized the ideal state and how the 'noble lie' became an instrument of propaganda to achieve governmental goals. He puts it this way, "knowing what class-war and revolution mean, we can understand why Plato advocated dictatorship to prevent them. Having seen some experiences of the effects of propaganda, we can treat the "noble lie" not as an amusing fantasy but as an extremely practical instrument of government. Our modern objection to Plato is that he is much too realistic in his analysis of human nature **(Ibid)**.

Crossman's objection to Platonism raises some fundamental philosophical problems. He accused him of fostering a savage philosophy which is an attack on liberal ideas. When is a philosophy said to be a savaged one? Is it when it attacks a traditional view point or when it exposed the weakness of a given position?. We need to be informed on these questions so that we could appreciate the objections raised by Crossman. The view that an idealist is remote from practical life is an old one and has no basis. An idealist is first and foremost, a metaphysician who has understood the mechanism of cognition. He projects into the unknown and interprets life from an objective, authentic and a comprehensive outlook. He could be misunderstood especially when his contribution

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might not have any relevance to an immediate issue. Give him sometime, you would begin to appreciate his position.

He also attacks Plato's ideal state as a wishful dream with a dictatorial framework whose mode of propaganda was through "a noble lie". This also brought out his hatred of democracy. His hatred of democracy was because it was an all comers affair. He is one that respected human reason and for him those who will pilot the affairs of the state should be men who are skillful in the art of statecraft. Merit should constitute the basis of such choice of people. Democracy failed to apply this scheme and this accounted for its rejection. Democracy no doubt makes much sense when it is domesticated to reflect the environmental circumstances. For example, democracy in Nigeria is yet to make any meaning of that concept. The issue of dictatorship and 'noble lie' through the vehicle of propaganda are central to all democracies. The difference is only in the level of political sophistication or backwardness of the society in question. Some underdeveloped countries use crude approach to foster their own propaganda in order to instill confidence and win the support of their followers.

Popper (1962) raised some serious objections not only against Plato's philosophy but on historicism in general. Historicism advocates the doctrine that history is controlled by specific historical or evolutionary laws whose discovery would enable us to prophesy the destiny of men (p.8). He maintained that historicism is an old idea, or rather, a loosely connected set of ideas which have become, unfortunately, so much a part of our spiritual atmosphere that they are usually taken for granted, and hardly ever questioned **(Ibid)**. He

made it clear that this attitude towards historicism is one of frank hostility, based upon the conviction that historicism is futile and worse than that. I am, rather bent on destroying what is in my opinion mischievous in this philosophy (p.34).

Popper's criticism of Plato's political philosophy which was based on the framework of his Theory of Forms contains the following elements.

a)   The strict division of the classes; that is, the ruling class consisting of herdsmen and watch-dogs must be strictly separated from the human cattle.

b)   The identification of the fate of the state with that of the ruling class; the exclusive interest in this class, and in its unity; and subservient to this unity, the rigid rules for breeding and educating this class, and the strict supervision and collectivization of the interests of its members.

The ruling class has a monopoly of things like military virtues and training, and of the right to carry arms and to receive education of any kind; but it is excluded from any participation in economic activities, and especially from earning money.

There must be a censorship of all intellectual activities of the ruling class, and a continual propaganda aiming at moulding and unifying their minds. All innovation in education, legislation and religion must be prevented or suppressed.

The state must be self-sufficient. It must aim at economic autarchy; for otherwise the rulers would either be dependent upon traders or become traders themselves. The first of these alternatives would undermine their power, the second their unity and the stability of the state **(Popper, 1962:86-87).**

These programmes in Poppers opinion, are totalitarian and anti-humanitarian. He defended this thesis in the following perspectives.

1. JUSTICE: In a humanitarian outlook, justice could mean

(a) an equal distribution of the burden of citizenship, that is, of those limitations of freedom which are necessary in social life.

(b) equal treatment of the citizens before the law, provided of course, that (c) the laws show neither favour nor disfavour towards individual citizens or groups or classes.

(d) impartiality of the courts of justice; and (e) an equal share in the advantages (and not only in the burden) which membership of the state may offer to its citizens (I bid p.89)

Plato's conception of justice in the Republic runs counter to the humanitarian dimension just outlined. He grounded justice in a just individual and a just city thus, "The city is just... if each of the three classes attends to its own work." Justice in this connection is identified with class privilege. The phrase, "every class should attend to its own business means that, the state is just if the ruler rules, if the worker works and if the slave slaves **(Ibid p.90)**

To this end, in Popper's view, Plato's notion of justice is fundamentally different from the humanitarian dimension just described. Justice here, refers to the absence of class privilege and equality in the treatment of individuals, while Plato considers justice not as a relationship between individuals, but as a property of the whole state, based on a

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relationship between its classes. The state is just if it is healthy, strong, united – stable (I bid).

2.   LEADERSHIP: The crucial question here is who should be entrusted with leadership? Or whose will should be supreme in exercising power in society? According to Popper, Plato created a lasting confusion in political philosophy. The reason for this, is that, once the question; who is to rule is asked? We often get such responses as "the best" or the wisest" or the born ruler or he who masters the art of ruling **(I bid p.120)**. Popper does not agree that political power should be given to the best ruler, or the wisest because the wisest ruler could still turn out to be the worst in the dispensation of political power. The greatest concern for Popper is not who should rule but the question of how can we so organize political institutions that bad or incompetent rulers can be prevented from doing too much damage **(I bid p.121)**.

This question is very fundamental in the history of political philosophy because, no country is free from the problem of corrupt and incompetent rulers. The degree of the problem varies from one society to another. Popper therefore, saw the urgent need to institute and consolidate a mechanism for checking the excesses of rulers and transfer sovereignty to the people.

3.   THE PHILOSOPHER-KING. In the *Republic*, Plato defined true philosophers as those that love the truth. This proposition according to Popper is deceitful and does not portray Plato's sincerity. He does not really believe in it, for he bluntly declares in other

places that it is one of the royal privileges of the sovereign to make full use of lies and deceit: 'It is the business of the rulers of the city, if it is anybody's to tell lies, deceiving both its enemies and its own citizens for the benefit of the city; and no one must touch this privilege **(I bid p. 138)**. Popper sees this as a totalitarian morality which aims at suppressing the liberty of the ruled. If a philosopher loves truth and goes ahead to tell lies then, we begin to have a problem with what truth is all about.

4.   UTOPIANISM: Popper made a distinction between Utopian, engineering and social engineering (piecemeal engineering). The Utopian approach is dangerous because it may be the obvious alternative to an out and out historicism. It is based on the theory that we cannot alter the course of history. On the other hand, piecemeal engineering is the only rational method. The politician who uses this method according to him may not have a blue print of society before his mind, he may or may not hope that man will attain the ideal on earth in order to achieve human happiness and perfection **(I bid p.160)**. He is aware that the ideal state if attainable is not going to be easy and so, he recognizes the need not to give the impression that perfection on earth is practicable. The piecemeal engineer will, accordingly, adopt the method of searching for, and fighting against, the greatest and most urgent evils of society, rather than searching for and fighting for its greatest ultimate good **(I bid p.158)**.

On the other hand, the Utopian attempt to realize an ideal state, using a blue print of society as a whole, is one which demands a strong centralized rule of a few, and which therefore, is likely to lead to a dictatorship **(I bid 159)**. From all that we have analyzed,

Popper's objection to Plato's theory of Forms which is the basis of his philosophy is based on the assumption that it is totalitarian, anti-humanitarian and promotes a single set of values, it is intolerant and does not encourage diversity. He saw Plato as one who contributed to a large extent the problems inimical to social progress, a forerunner of Marxism, fascism and dictatorship which are incompatible with political stability.

Some criticisms have been leveled against Karl Popper for his objections to Platonism. Some of the positions maintain that Popper was coming from a perspective of politics rather than philosophy. As a result of his orientation, certain philosophical propositions might be misunderstood. His criticisms on historicism appear to be misdirected. E.K. Ogundowole made this clear when he said, 'Hardly can one doubt the fact that Popper is in fact motivated by political consideration and ideological prejudice rather than logico-methodological consideration **(Ogundowole, 1981:62)**. He buttressed his position by this postulation of Popper thus; "Holistic… social engineering as opposed to piecemeal social engineering is never of a 'private' but always of 'public' character. It aims at seizing the key' positions' the historical forces that mould the future of the developing society **(Popper, 1962:67)**. Looking at this position, Popper appears to over-look the philosophical truism that change is a permanent feature of reality because, of his subjective political considerations.

In another development, he maintained that our ethical education must be to work for the sake of work, but not to wait for, or expect reward. He described as a dubious morality that man must get reward for work done **(I bid p.277)**. It is on this ground that

Ogundowole describes Popper's philosophy as the philosophy of the justification of injustice, of the morality of exploitation and oppression **(Ogundowole, 1981:64).**

Badru, (1985) situates Karl Popper's philosophy within the empiricist paradigm both methodologically and epistemologically. According to him, Popper's epistemology is an attempt to resolve the difficulties which stem from the creation within philosophy of an abstract problem of knowledge via the antithesis of a knowing subject and a known real object. He maintained that in pure empiricism; the subject is an empirical subject (mind), and the object is the real world of "constantly conjoined objects and events. "Knowledge then, according to this framework, is necessarily defined as cognition and abstraction from the real by the subject. Badru observed that Popper gave a distorted image of objective knowledge which he went at length to describe. Based on this position, he sees his contribution to philosophy as lacking in commitment to the advancement of objective knowledge but in promoting particular ideological stance. He demonstrated this ideological stance in his attack on historicism especially Marxism which he labels as totalitarian and therefore an enemy of the open society. According to him, in order to plan, in order to consciously reproduce your existence, you must know the future, but this is impossible- hence communism (rational planning) is an impossibility. He also sees Plato's idea as a logical impossibility describing his entire political programme as untenable. To this end, he took a hostile position declaring an intellectual war between philosophy and empiricism.

As Seery (1990) observed, Popper's criticism of Plato was based on the fact that he emphasized the political ramifications of the logic rather than focusing on the questions of, for instance, justice, and art as matters of abstract argument. He related Popper's views on Plato to that of Bertrand Russell who emphasized with equal vehemence the point that insidious consequences are unleashed on politics when ever philosophic ideals take hold. Russell took his evidence by pointing to the deleterious effects of philosophy in the similar cases of Nazism, the soviets and the Catholics.

Strauss (1959:28 and 78) examines Plato's philosophy and its relationship to politics. He is of the view that Plato relegated his "Utopia" to the sphere of the impossible precisely, so that, we may understand the marked difference between the possible and the purely visionary, when it matters in an actual political thinking. He argued that, a just city is impossible because, it draws its character from human nature. The fictional portrayal of a perfect city as analyzed in the *Republic* is but a limiting concept for real politics. The perfect city for Strauss is an impossibility because of the human elements. This is a valid argument. We are of the view that its aspiration is a catalyst to human mind to transcendence. This is what Plato had in mind, to challenge the mind to activate its powers to its full blown metaphysical powers.

There is a marked difference between Strauss on Plato's Utopianism and Popper. Strauss' argument about Plato's philosophic Utopia affords backhanded support for a global politics that is characterized by exclusivity, patriotism, militarism, egalitarian, anti-communist meritocratic and democratic. While Popper sees Plato's Utopianism as a

threat to liberal democracy **(Strauss, 1959:73,37, 111, 144, 222).** One will agree with some of the differences pointed out by both Strauss and Popper in addressing social and political stability. If human nature is taken into consideration, Plato's ideal city is a model of a rational society whose aspiration is to make men work towards an effort to establish an egalitarian society. This is where human happiness and well-being could be articulated.

Bambrough, (1967) observed that the first attack of the modern critics is directed against Plato's concrete proposals for the organization of human society. The critics recoil in democratic horror from the censorship proposals, from the cold-blooded justification of lying propaganda, from the control of breeding which treats man as a mere animal. They are incensed at the autocratic principles on which Plato organizes his ideal community. He synthesized the positions of Popper, Russell and Crossman as representing the danger of the closed society which represents totalitarianism **(Bambrough, 1967:104).**

In the opinion of this research, there is no doubt that, Plato's ideal or perfect state is not only authoritarian both in principle and practice but also reduces the status of man. It impacts negatively on the destruction of the family as a basic unit of social production. The programme on having wives in common is totally rejected. How does it apply in today's society with the dreaded disease AIDS? It is a threat not only to the health and well being of the society but portends a total annihilation of the society. If society is faced with such health hazard, its existence might be jeopardized. We are of the

conviction that the family should be sacred and given all the encouragement to perform its role of social production. Plato's programme of cross-breeding represents modern day theory on cloning which has attracted criticisms both on moral and social grounds. What will be the reaction of society on such offspring in terms of acceptability and values? This is the question on cross breeding and its effects on human society. To this end, the notion of crossbreeding as a method of maintaining the balance of the state is animalistic and therefore, appalling to humanity.

Ferguson (1975) evaluated Plato's theory of Forms from a comparative analysis. His division of the state into three classes of philosopher-kings, auxiliaries and the artisans resembles the Hindu stratification of society. The Brahmins are the philosopher-rulers, and their quality is Sattva, intellectual and moral virtue, the Kshattryas are the soldiers (auxiliaries) and their quality is Rajas, emotional energy and passion, the Vaishyas are the traders and producers and represents Tamas, desire for physical satisfaction, the Sudras the fourth class, are set off from the others as 'once born only'. The last corresponds to the unmentioned slave. This rigid rule attracts serious objections.

1)   It does not encourage grass root democracy in national politics. For him politics is a profession for the expert and skillful. Majority of human beings fall outside this realm. Participation in political life is limited and elitist. This is not likely to encourage political stability.

2)   Although he takes pains to separate his ruling class from two of the main temptations associated with power, wealth and family, he forgets the corruption of power as stated by Lord Action "Power tends to corrupt and absolute power

corrupts absolutely." Great men are almost always bad men. Plato in the *Gorgias* one of his dialogues deplored the corrupting effect of power only to forget so soon in the *Republic*. This is human and natural.

3) He tends to envisage the ideal of a static perfection. This is a dead ideal not a living one as he later admitted and subsequently revised some of these position in the *Laws* **(Ferguson, 1975:67-68)**.

The object lesson in the laws and which is fundamental to the revision in Plato's philosophy is his support for a mixed constitution. Our position is that he seems to understand the practical realities of human nature. This negates his conception of the possibility of an infallible individual or group at the top echelon of the society charged with wisdom. This reveals to him the need to secure the active consent of all the members of society if such a state aspires to be stable. This does not suggest a rejection of the theory of Forms because he was still of the view of the existence of absolute moral standards. A system of laws according to him will encapsulate these less perfectly than the man of real wisdom. This position shows that he still assigned strategic roles to philosophy in attaining a stable society.

Rejecting this view, **Johnson, (1977)** argued that he does not agree that these super-intellectuals, those other worldly-eggheads, can actually be efficient in our world. Most definitely, I do not admit that they are fit to rule the country. The glamourized portrait of the philosopher-kings is too good to be true despite the effort to make the theory plausible.

He maintained that there are some claims that these so-called philosopher-kings are self seeking, unprincipled rogues. Even if some appear normal and enter public life, they will use any means to maintain their position. Further, these freaks shun hard work and refuse to join in co-operative practical activities for the common good. Because they are so smart, to considerable extent, these intellectuals escape from the restrictions which society places on decent people, thus, they become distorted monsters **(Johnson, 1977:30)**. Johnson's reaction appears as if he has seen Plato's ideal state in practical demonstration. We do not think that Plato intended this state to be realized in our world. As a product of a crisis prone environment, such postulation is imperative in order to attain peace of mind.

Dewey, (1972) discusses the concept of the ideal as stated by classical philosophers. According to him, the ideal world is essentially a haven in which man finds rest from the storms of life; it is an asylum in which he takes refuge from the troubles of existence with the calm assurance that it alone is supremely real. When the belief that knowledge is active and operative takes hold of men, the ideal realm is no longer something aloof and separate; it is rather that collection of imagined possibilities that stimulates men to new efforts and realizations (P.118).

Dewey maintained that it still remains true that the troubles which men undergo are the forces that lead them to project pictures of a better state of things. The picture of the

better is shaped so that it may become an instrumentality of action, while in the classic view the idea belongs to the real world of reality **(I bid p.118).**

The ideal in Plato's conception is not a religious hallucination or an escape from reality but, an attempt to challenge our minds to think metaphysically. In his constructive criticism of metaphysics, Immanuel Kant a German Philosopher argued that language could only be used to describe the appearance of objects. This view suggests that there are things we cannot describe with language. As a result of this position, he made a distinction between things as they appear to us (phenomena) and things as they are in themselves (Noumena) Plato's world of Forms in this analysis is of the noumenal type, a world of metaphysical beings which is outside the categories of human understanding.

The criticisms of metaphysics by Kant emerged from his response to the question, "What can we know"? He argued that we cannot know things as reason. His argument is that, the human mind is endowed with categories which the mind imposes on things. The function of the intellect therefore, is to synthesis what is presented to the senses, for thinking is uniting representations in our consciousness **(cf Unah, 1996:85).**

The capacity of the mind to impose itself on objects is the famous Kant's Copernican Revolution in philosophy. Before the emergence of this revolution, the human mind was said to be passive in our process of cognition. What this means is that objects impose themselves on the mind and give meaning and interpretation. Kant's Copernican revolution shows the power of the mind to impose itself on objects thereby giving us an

insight into what the object appears to be. The human mind in this connection, restructures objects and makes them appear to us in certain ways that they can be perceived. The interpretation of objects of experience depends on our intellectual framework to give meaning and intelligibility.

The logical implication of Kant's Copernican revolution with regards to the minds limitation of attaining knowledge of the Noumena, shows that metaphysical knowledge is impossible. This impossibility resulted from the attempt of the human mind in going beyond things as they appear to us. Although, Kant admitted the inability of metaphysics in giving us knowledge of the world, he made room for a practical reason otherwise, called an act of metaphysics which gives the assumption for the existence of metaphysical beings as indispensable for the guidance of the understanding and will in life **(Kant, 1962:189).**

In the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant elicited an interest in metaphysics which fascinated Martin Heidegger a German ontologist (1889-1976) He saw the critique as a clarion call for fundamental ontology or a preliminary laying of the foundation of metaphysics **(Unah, 1997:85).** Heidegger is of the view that, Kant's criticism of metaphysics rather than seek a complete elimination, seeks to bring to light the basic originality of the origin of metaphysics **(Heidegger, 1962:5).**

The basic origin of metaphysics otherwise, known as ontology, is the understanding of being which has suffered a callous and hardened forgetfulness. Heidegger took, a

retrospective excursion into the origin of western philosophy and observed that Being was the intellectual foundation in the beginning of western metaphysics. Heidegger's philosophical project was to lay a solid foundation for ontology through the methodology of phenomenology so that, man can achieve possibilities through the ontological spectacle. Plato's theory of Forms can be well understood through the instrumentality of ontology. This perspective will attempt to correct the mistaken or rather distorted criticism leveled against the theory and its attendant benefits in human cognition.

Seery, (1990) evaluated Plato's theory as contained in the *Republic* and described the whole work as an irony. What does he mean by irony? Does an irony exhaust other possibilities not covered by other objections? The *New Lexicon Webster's Dictionary* (p.511) defines irony as a manner of speaking or writing to which the meaning literarily expressed is the opposite of the meaning intended and which aims at ridicule, humour or sarcasm. Irony can also mean the quality of an event or situation which is the opposite of what is promised or expected and which therefore, seems to mock one's expectation. It depicts a literary technique in which characters and situation, are treated in such a way as to show the incongruities between appearances and reality, intentions and achievements.

Seery, maintains strongly, that, *Plato's Republic* has an ironic origin. He based his evidence on the works of Socrates Plato's master whose philosophy he developed. The origin of the concept of irony in English dates back to its introduction as 'Yronye' in 1502 (Knox, 1961:15) and from Latin "ironia" and Greek word "eironeia". This suggests that irony as a technique of writing has been in existence before Socrates. Sedgewick

(1948) confirms that the first recorded use of irony is to be found in *Plato's Republic* book one. Thrasymarchus asked Socrates, what is justice? Socrates puts him off tactically without answering the question with a show of modesty and a backhanded compliment. Thrasymarchus responds (laughing scornfully): "Ye gads! Here we have the famous irony of Socrates, I knew it, and I predicted to these fellows that you would refuse to answer, that you would be ironic and do anything rather than answer if someone asked you something (*Republic*, 1997:13).

From this encounter between Socrates and Thrasymarchus Seery observed that, irony began to acquire a pejorative connotation. It was also associated with Socrates personality and influence who was thought to be a deceptive fellow who deliberately misguided his friends mocking them while praising them sarcastically, and all the while, managing to evade the central issues altogether **(Seery, 1990:97).** Irony in this sense according to Knox, was a sort of vulgar expression of reproach. A sly, deceptive pretence **(Knox, 1961:3).**

In Aristotle's philosophy, irony began to have a transformed phase. Most rhetoriticians regard him as the first thinker to raise irony to a more dignified position though his praise was reluctantly relative. He sees irony as a kind of artful dissimulation or self-depreciative concealment, which was one extreme of the spectrum of virtue that has at its opposite end alazoneia or boastful exaggeration. The mean of the two is truth **(Seery, 1990:97).**

Aristotle recommended eironeia to alazoneioa as a guide to personal conduct, for if a person is unable to tell the precise truth, it is better for him to conceal rather than to exaggerate his virtues. What this means is that, it is better to be modest than to exaggerate issues. There appears to be a missing link in Aristotle's recommendation of irony in his rhetorics. He did not treat irony as a general mannerism or methods nor did he address the implicit philosophical paradox involved in Socrates claim that he knew nothing.

We do not think that Aristotle could be accused for not addressing the Socrates' paradoxes especially as it affects the claim that he never knew anything. It is better to allow others to evaluate us than evaluating ourselves. An individual could claim to be all knowing but his appearance before a panel would bring out his deficiencies. In our view, the claim of Socrates for not knowing any thing is in line with the view expressed by Aristotle that it is better to be modest than being exaggerative. His claim for not knowing anything depicts humility and intellectual openness which turns out as an instrument of honesty.

Kierkegaard (1813-1855) an existentialist, is the main theorist of Socratic irony. Following Hegel and Schleiermacher, he distinguished between Socrates and Plato on the character of irony. He saw the negative character of irony in book one of Plato's *Republic*. Hegel has previously criticized irony on the ground that it allows persons to be insufficiently philosophical. Kierkegaard embraced irony because it represented a moment in which philosophy becomes personal. The method Socrates employed may not have yielded any positive results, but it established through the process of questioning

and dialogue a kind of negative freedom for the individual. He maintained that Socrates through his irony created an essential character but his was an existence lying on a point between, as it were, xenophon and Plato: "Irony oscillates between the ideal self and the empirical self; one would make Socrates a philosopher and the other a sophists (Kierkegaard, 1965:158).

Friedlander (1969) tailored his view from Goethe and maintains that Plato is a master of irony. He is of the view, that it will not be easy to approach Plato's work without reference to irony and its place in his work. He gave an illustration of Plato's irony from the point of view of the question put to him by Thrasymarchus on justice. If his answer was positive as expected from Thrasymarchus, he would have yielded to an impossible request that the question demands one, and only one, already determined answer from a man for whom there is, as an answer, only continuous search. "Hence he dissimulates himself, but, as Hegel shows, this ignorance turns back to an ultimate stage of wisdom. For him, the line of demarcation between Socratic irony and Plato is not sharp. He contended that as analysts of Plato, we gradually ascend to forms of irony for which Plato the artist and thinker, alone is responsible (Friendlander, 1969:145). This artistic design in Plato he referred to as "polyphonic structure of irony." As the concept implies, polyphonic structure means two characters in one person in this case, an artist and a thinker.

In portraying Socrates irony posing as a simple reporter of the dialogue, Plato sets up various ironic tension between Socrates verbal jests and the more solemn direction of the

dialogues. The parallelism of ironies and ironic tensions then point beyond Socrates, "straight to a metaphysical dimension, to the ultimate height to which it is raised by Plato, the ironic metaphysical **(I bid p.147).**

A clearer anti-metaphysical outlook against the *Republic of Plato* was presented by Jowett and Campbell. In his notes Jowett pays close attention to Socrates ironic remarks and gestures through out the dialogue of the *Republic*. According to Jowett, Socrates' irony is not an isolated figure of speech or method of argument but, as a more general outlook upon the human condition. On irony, Jowett comments, "The word gains new association from the application of it to Socrates, who not only pretended ignorance with the view of gaining an advantage in argument, but sincerely believed it to be the natural condition of man **(Jowett and Campbell 1901).**

We are of the view in this research that the aspersions cast on irony has no philosophical justification. Irony represents a stage in metaphysical development. Man is a metaphysical being who tries at all times to think of a better understanding of reality. Metaphysics apart from being ingrained in human nature has the capacity also to change human cognition for the better. Projecting from one realm of reality to another which is a transcendental exercise makes room for human creativity which translates into concrete solutions to human problems.

Jowett also criticizes Plato's theory of education on the ground that it falls short of the expectations of modern thinkers. In his introduction to Plato's Republic, he observed that

Plato opposed the mode of education which prevailed in his time, but he can hardly be said to have discovered new ones. He does not see that education is relative to the character of the individual he only desires to impress the same form of the state on the minds of all. He has no sufficient idea of the effect of literature on the formation of the minds, and greatly exaggerates that of mathematics. His aim is above all things, to train the reasoning faculties, to implant in the mind the spirit and power of abstractions; to explain and define general notions, and if possible to connect them **(Jowett, 1901 Lxxii).** Plato's perspective on education depicts the tradition of the Greek type of general education to prepare the citizens for life. As at that time the need for specialisation has not arisen. This could be a possible reason for this kind of general education. The likely problem is that this type of education was not targeted at the individual aptitude and mental disposition. This type of education cannot serve our modern civilization where the need for specialization is more urgent.

In his own objection, **Blumental (1993)** criticized Plato's first problem which is centred on the world of Forms and its extent. According to him, Socrates in the Parmenides is unwilling to accept the existence of Forms of things which are trivial of undignified example,. Mud, dirt or hair. Parmenides is of the view, that he will learn to accept them when he becomes more of a philosopher. Whether Plato did or did not accept these particular substances as suitable for Forms, there are other doubts about what has ideal archetypes. Plotinus a Neo-Platonist examined Plato's theory of Forms by maintaining that everything that exists here in the physical world exists in the intelligible too, though in a superior mode, and derives its existence from it.

Blumenthal is here raising the philosophical problem of particulars and universals. As a point of clarification, particulars are understood through universals. The example of mud, dirt and hair given above raised doubt whether they could be described as Forms. Plotinus appears to be offering a solution when he argued that everything that exists here in the physical world also exists in the world of Forms. He gave much value to the Forms because in his view, the Forms belong to a superior mode and gives life to the physical.

In his reaction on Plato's theory of Forms **Ogundowole (2002, 2004)** observed that the good and the just in Plato's conception are not the inventions or conventions of human societies but discoveries rooted in waves which merely come and go, they are but appearance; the idea of a wave is timeless. Individual cats are born and they die, but the idea of cat is timeless. The world of the logical mind was conceived by Plato to be the supreme reality of which the object and occurrences of daily life are but imperfect shadows. He maintained that Socrates, Plato and the Pythagoreans erroneously believed that moral purpose rules the universe.

In Plato's view the laws of the physical universe, like the laws of the spiritual universe, are expressions of a cosmic drive towards perfection. Given the development of modern science and its attainment this emphasis on purpose and perfection in nature by later philosophers was unfortunate. It is a distortion which is capable of consolidating the ignorance of unliberated primitive thought pattern.

The objections leveled against Platonism cut across many areas of intellectual endeavours. Some of these objections raise further philosophical problems. One thing that must be borne in mind is that Plato was concerned with how to attain stability in a world prone to crisis conflict and injustice. The theory of Forms therefore, is a metaphysical solution for attaining social stability. Any objection that did not take cognizance of this metaphysical dimension is not likely to understand and appreciate Plato's contribution to political stability.

4. 6 SUMMARY

Political and social stability are desirable because they are the basis for peace, progress and development . Unfortunately, instability seems to be the order of the day because it is ingrained in man's physiological chemistry. Both Heidegger and Unah attest to this position from an existential dimension. Their conclusion is that instability is inevitable in any social or political dispensation. Heraclitus and Parmenides also exposed the metaphysical concept of instability and stability through the state of flux theory and the theory of permanence respectively. While Heraclitus favoured the view that reality is in a constant state of flux, Parmenides maintained that reality is permanent or stable. The reconciliation of the theory of state of flux of Heraclitus and permanence of Parmenides inspired Plato to pontificate on the ideal society. The ideal state is the metaphysical presentation of Plato's theory of stability or permanence and instability or impermanence. This state of affairs is anchored on dualism namely, the physical or the world of becoming and the world of Forms or ideas. For Plato, political can only be achieved through the idea or what is commonly referred to as metaphysical dialectics. Plato's

presentation in this regard is an abstract metaphysical pontification characterized by an exclusive pure contemplation. This is transcendence per excellence. This metaphysical power of projection is responsible for innovation, creative ingenuity and inventiveness. Many factors were enumerated as agents of political and social instability .Such factors are religion ,culture politics and law. In the management of these factors, political and social instability assume a new and complex dimension resulting in violence terrorism and war. Religion, culture, politics and law are instruments of social control and regulation. In an effort to implement them, injustice is fostered which in turn affects human rights and dignity. To avoid this ugly situation Plato was convinced that the only solution lies in understanding the operations of his ideal state otherwise known as Plato's utopia. The ideal state is structured along the pattern of his social stratification of the philosopher-kings, the soldiers and the artisans. The operational mode for the actualization of the ideal state is the strict application of the division of labour. The division of labour or what Plato refers to as departmental excellence requires every man to master a unit of social or political production in order to achieve harmony, peace and concord. In the presentation of this proposal, Plato neglected human nature which is not fixed. Human nature tends to manifest in interaction and relationship. The loopholes created by Plato's totalitarian programme, attracted a wide range of criticisms from philosophers of diverse orientations.

Hegel for instance, accused Plato of obscure abstraction in the analysis of the ideal state. According to Hegel the ideal state falls short of mans requirement by virtue of its impossibility. The legendary Karl Popper ridiculed Plato's ideal state describing it as an

authoritarian state which is incompatible with humanitarian values. For Crossman, the Republic of Plato can only be sustained by the noble lie anchored on propaganda to keep the three classes in perpetual bondage and prevent bloodshed. Kierkegaard and Strauss attacked Plato's ideal state describing it as irony. An irony for them presents polyphonic dimension of the truth. In this case, Plato played the role of an artist and a philosopher. For Kierkegaard, irony does not contain a thorough and hard core cerebral analysis. The worst of these objections came from Aristotle Plato's pupil. Aristotle rejected Plato's dualism of the physical and the world of Forms and replaced with his concept of Matter and Form. This rejection turned out to be another metaphysical problem. Aristotle was of the view that the multiplication of entities as a way of resolving the metaphysical problem of instability is un called for. One will appreciate Aristotle's position bearing in mind various efforts put in place to manage the philosophical problems of instability. It is in this connection that this thesis submits that social and political instability are practical manifestation of man's fundamental insecurity.

CHAPTER FIVE

AN ONTOLOGICAL BASIS FOR PLATO'S THEORY OF JUSTICE AS A FOUNDATION FOR SOCIO-POLITICAL STABILITY

5.0 INTRODUCTION

Political stability formed the central theme of Plato's theory of justice. The reason for this is that political instability has plagued civil society right from antiquity. Many solutions have been proffered and implemented by various societies but to no avail. Political stability viewed from this perspective reflects one of the human predicaments. While efforts are made to proffer solutions we should also look beyond proffering solutions and attempt to ground political instability as man's natural tendency. The reason for this is that human nature is compatible with instability. In this connection, it is an ontological structure of man. By an ontological structure of man, we mean that instability is ingrained in man's consciousness, it has formed part and parcel of our physiological chemistry. Our actions and reactions as reflected in our policies and their implementations give enough room for political instability. Worse of all, is the violation of human dignity through injustice. It is therefore, difficult to talk of political and social stability when injustice has taken the political stage through policies, human transactions and relationship. It is imperative in this research to consider the phenomenological ontological perspective of political and social stability as a foundation of peace and just society.

5.1 THE NATURE OF POLITICAL STABILITY

When we talk of a political system as being stable, what do we mean? Does it mean an absence of crisis or conflict? Does it mean that such a system remains the way it is without alteration? These questions are crucial because they show to a large extent what political stability is all about. The word "stable" for example, has been defined as remaining or able to remain unchanged in form, structure, character etc under conditions tending to cause such change. Something which is capable of returning to its original condition, or recover its equilibrium after being slightly displaced, something that is permanent, enduring, firm of purpose, not easily thrown off balance, not readily decomposing or changing (Cayne, 1988:964).

Political stability from this conception, does not rule out the element of conflict or crisis but has developed a mechanism for regulation. Normalcy can be restored within some conditions. What are these conditions? And what is expected to be done in a moment of crisis? There is an attempt to link development with democracy. With respect to the link between development and democracy, it is imperative that unless there is peace, development is not possible. What is not as well known is that unless there is development, peace at least in the long run is equally impossible (Nnoli 1994). For Nnoli, development is the vehicle through which individuals and groups are able to withstand the worst forms of human suffering created by the difficulties and hostility of the physical environment. On the other hand, he observed that peace cannot be sustained without democracy which ensures the full liberation of the creative energies of individuals and groups in all facets of the life of society. Such a liberation presupposes the enjoyment of

certain basic rights such as work, education, food, health services, speech, movement, assembly, privacy and participation in the decision-making process. In the absence of these values, the individual becomes alienated from society, withdraws legitimacy from governmental authority and the people cannot be committed to the creation of new values on the basis of a collective ethos, tolerance, trust, consensus, patriotism and loyalty to governmental authority.

Stability is necessary for development and that is why democracy is favoured as providing the environment for social and political stability. The inevitable consequences of instability is manifested in armed resistance and eventual civil war or other forms of socio-political instability which also shatter the peace of a society. Where peace is lacking development is hindered. Giving strong support for this position, Oyediran (1996) maintains that democracy encourages stability and stability encourages development. He argues that defective political structures such as federalism constitutional blunders promote instability and affect the peace process. Democracy is favourably disposed to political stability and encourages development. This position is echoed once more by Oyediran citing **Chazan (1996)** that instability makes complete rehabilitation impossible. But an observation was made that stability does not suggest a sufficient ingredient for positive development and a democratic political system. Examples of Lybya, Benin Republic and Togo were cited as stable countries in Africa. Some of these countries appear to be stable but on a critical examination they depict what Jackson and Rosberg called personal rule system of government.

Based on this observation, the emerging thesis here is that stability even in authoritarian system of personal rule is prone to serious danger. One of such dangers is that of succession if the personal ruler dies. Conclusively, it is not enough to be stable, it is necessary to be democratic. The concept of personal rule portraying stability should be properly examined. The reason for this is that such countries operate a dictatorial constitutional provision favourable to their wishes and aspirations. This kind of political manipulation is a true reflection of inauthentic life. Inauthenticity refers to a situation where the self abandons itself, a self forgets itself, a self disowns itself. Inauthentic self is a self that fails or refuses to affirm or actualise itself, it is an unowned self **(Unah, 2002 b:74)**. Unah maintains further that inauthenticity characterizes a flight of the self from itself, implying a state of affairs where man cannot choose himself or where man succumbs to the dictatorship of the anonymous promiscuous public.

What we can deduce from the inauthentic self is that one who is so engrossed with power can go all out to sustain himself in power. By so doing, he seems to take control which gives the impression that such a society is stable. This stability is artificial, hypocritical and not a genuine one. It is better to embrace an authentic selfhood which provides a framework for true liberation which is a prelude to stability. One other problem to be considered is the impression that democracy constitutes a viable instrument for stability. Is it true? Against this background Oyediran (1996) citing **Crick (1996)** argued that while democracy as a social movement must exist in nearly all modern forms of political rule, it is the destruction of politics if taken alone and as a matter of principle. He continues, "Democracy is perhaps the most promiscuous word in the world of public

affairs, she is everybody's mistress and yet somehow retains her magic even when a lover sees that her favours are being, in his light, illicitly shared by many others. Indeed, even amid our pain at being denied her exclusive fidelity, we are proud of her adaptability to all sorts of circumstances to all sorts of company" (p.113).

There is no doubt that democracy has been abused even by societies who do not comply with its stipulated requirements. Democracy has the capacity for adaptability whether rightly or wrongly. Some are proud to display the tag boldly in order to receive aids from the international community. In actual fact the principles of democracy is still non-existent in policy statements and their application on what makes democracy acceptable, **Oyediran (1996)** stipulates that there are certain basic requirements necessary for the growth of a people in order to be able to cope with the higher forms of social and political intercourse in the world today, namely; personal liberty, freedom of thought and conscience, freedom of expression whether oral or written, freedom of movement, freedom to participate in the choice of leaders and policies. For him, this is democracy because it provides "the conditions for the full and free development of the essential human capacities of all the members of society" (p.85).

We agree with Oyediran that certain basic requirements are necessary. What some societies do is to domesticate democracy according to the dictates of their environment. This domestication is somehow misleading because democracy is culture driven and thrives in such societies that have established the enabling environment for democratization. Some cultures do not accommodate democratic challenges and may not

be able to sustain its mechanism. This position has given rise to the thesis that democracy is alien to Africa. This school of thought maintains that Africa is not ripe for democracy. Arthur Lewis in disagreeing with this view, summed it up thus, "these are the enemies of Africans who are delighted to have evidence that Africans are not yet ripe for the higher forms of social intercourse. It is evident that democracy is yet to take shape in Africa because of some cultural impediments seen in competition for political power which in our view, is unnatural to the Africans. We maintain that the prevalence of one party system in Africa is a further demonstration of democratic intolerance. It is not enough to claim to be democratic but it is necessary to practice a system of government that can sustain stability. This is a major challenge for democratization in Africa and other parts of the world. One party rule in African societies goes back to the old metaphysical temper where one reality takes precedence over others. What matters here is what is, "isness", what is not, is an illusion.

In the opinion of this research, this constitutes the foundation of instability, conflict and crisis and if not checked poses a serious threat to society. Political stability cannot be achieved in an atmosphere of suppression of opinions or points of view but, it can be achieved when we allow a proper access to understand the basic features of a democratic culture. Such features include proliferation of opinions because in such opinions, we can articulate a way forward for a better political and social order.

For Rodee et al (1983) political stability is measured by a coherent and articulated constitution. The argument here is that the most obvious measure of democracy is

universal suffrage, which is the right of all citizens to vote in elections. Like the democratic government that it defines, universal suffrage has been a long time in coming. This also, is to say that in most cases, the development of democracy has been a gradual process, not the result of divine intervention, a thunder-bolt from Zeus or a definitive decree from some group of founding fathers. In fact, there is ample testimony to support the following proposition; where the right to vote is extended quickly and suddenly to all citizens, the result is likely to be instability followed by authoritarian politics not stable democracy.

The position of Rodee and his group on universal suffrage as a prelude to political stability missed a new wave in elections today. It is the inability of elections to portray the wishes and the aspirations of the electorates. What is popular, is landslide victory even in places where voting actually did not place. A new dimension has been introduced by parties in order to deny victory to their opponents. Sometimes, the result announced is more than the registered voters. This poses a big problem in respecting the wishes of the electorates. There are provisions for addressing electoral malpractice but it takes time for justice to take its course. This is an aspect of democracy that is incompatible with political stability. It is imperative to respect the wishes of the electorates so that their consent to leadership choice will be enhanced.

Political stability or instability is a product of order or disorder. What is a product of order? Order could be concluded of in terms of human dignity, others in terms of peace, yet others in terms of a war-less system, some negatively in the sense of the absence of

anarchy. Disorder on the other hand, may be interpreted to cover quite a number of situations among which may include the following:

i)   Tendencies in the national or international system leading to armed conflict;

ii)   armed struggle itself in whatever form, whether conventional or guerrilla;

iii)   a situation where the normal pattern of relations has been disrupted, resulting in instability and insecurity **(Ajomo, 1984)**

In the development of order and disorder, Ajomo referred us to the Hobbesian theory of the state of nature which was a state of perpetual conflict, insecurity and war. The Hobbesian society according to him was like the biblical universe as described in the Christian scriptures, The Genesis, it was formless and desolate with darkness upon the face of the deep. The only difference between the two is that, in the case of the biblical universe, God was able to bring order into a chaotic situation within a shot space of only seven days. However, in the case of human society, disorder has been the rule rather than the exception with the result that the perfect society with Christian ideal, envisaged by St. Augustine in his city of God, has eluded mankind for centuries and does not seem attainable even in the foreseeable future. We can see from here therefore, that at all levels, there is this constant struggle between the instinct in man to fall foul of established principles and the desire for self-preservation. Order, which is a product of law and morality is aimed at checking and controlling the excessive instincts in man. To overcome this chaos in the Hobbesian notion, men entered by way of contract into a society in which they conferred upon a sovereign power (Leviathan) all of the rights

necessary to ensure peace. The question now is, has this peace been actualized? Is the Leviathan able to accommodate all the conflicting interests in civil society?

Is the Leviathan absolute powers disposed towards achieving peace? In the opinion of this research, the answer is no. The reason for this position is that human conflict crisis or disorder, which result in instability, is an ontological structure of man.

This position was made explicit by **Unah (2002)**. He maintained that there is a fundamental insecurity embedded in man's ontological structure, which snowballs into all forms of instability. As he says, the origin of every form of instability lies in the fact that we are human **(Unah, 2002b:22)**. He referred to Heidegger's analysis of a number of ontological concepts such as guilt, objectless anxiety, anticipatory resoluteness or the Dasein in man which more or less, point to this fundamental insecurity ingrained in man's physiological chemistry. These ontological concepts, which Heidegger analysed, reflect the existential traits of human existence. Fundamental insecurity is man's natural condition. It depicts the fluid character of human reality. Heraclitus, a pre-Socratic philosopher, in his theory of change, stated that reality is in a constant state of flux. This doctrine of perpetual flux indicates that the only thing permanent in reality is the cosmic principle of change.

Heidegger's analysis of ontological concepts, which we have enumerated, located the source of political and social stability in man's nature. Unah agreed with this view, when he stated that political instability is a form of social instability and all forms of social instability are rooted in man's fundamental insecurity **(I bid. p.23)**. The question now is,

what is fundamental insecurity? Why is it associated with man's natural condition? Jean-Paul Sartre an existentialist gave us a clue to what is meant by fundamental insecurity. According to him, it is that nothingness which lies coiled like a worm in the heart of being (1943:21). This maxim has various interpretations by scholars of various persuasions. For instance, Unah an Ontologist interpreted it to mean that man has a native ability to be what he is not and not to be what he is (I bid). For Heidegger, it is man's ability to be and to be not. He described it with a philosophical concept of existentiality. In Economics, fundamental insecurity is referred to as man's insatiability. This means that human needs are not capable of being satisfied. One need gives rise to another. Take for example, a student enrolls for a degree programme in philosophy, graduates, looks for a job, gets a job, begins to plan for a family, marries, raises children, begins to think of building a house, buying a car etc. At any point in time there is one need to satisfy.

The problem of fundamental insecurity shows man's ability to think metaphysically. This is because man is not satisfied with a particular state of affairs. He makes projections from time to time all aimed at improving his social condition. In this act of finite transcendence, man demonstrates his propensity to get to the root of his metaphysical powers. This power enables him to engage in all activities to improve his environment and society. This is insecurity par excellence. For Unah, it is to this insecurity or what we call anticipatory resoluteness that we owe all our world-constituting activities. It is to it that we owe all our attempts at organization, consolidation and stabilization (I bid p.23).

From here, we could see that political instability will persist as long as man keeps his transcendental powers. Man has not been stagnant in a given situation, in some cases; he prefers to be what he is not or what he can never attain. Sometimes, he allows his passions and desires to take control of his life. There is no other evidence of man's restlessness than this. Man's restless search for reality shows how enthusiastic he is in solving societal problems. In all these, he creates some form of instability, which might affect a political order. Man's eccentricity has resulted in what is called a "demonstration effect". As the term implies, it is the ability of man to develop an appetite ahead of what he can satisfy. This state of affairs is natural to man. It exists in different degrees and that is why instability is a permanent feature of human reality. Man's restiveness or restlessness was described by St Augustine as a deep natural yearning for happiness. He maintained that, the human heart is restlessly seeking happiness, and it will remain restless until, it finds the happiness it seeks. This happiness is a perfect one and no transitory or imperfect happiness will satisfy this natural yearning, He stated further, "You have made us for yourself, O! God, and our hearts are restless, until they rest in you" (Augustine, 1972; Omoregbe, 2001).

Augustine proffered a solution to this restlessness of man, which he grounded on God. According to him, God, alone can satisfy this natural desire, for God alone can be the object of perfect happiness, nothing else can bring perfect happiness, nothing else can provide man with this perfect happiness that man seeks after. Augustine made this matter more complicated by maintaining that man needs the grace of God to attain this state of

happiness. The concept of the grace of God has been criticized on the ground that it is a reflection of an inauthentic existential philosophy. It is a paralyzing state of affairs whereby man abandons the self, where man surrenders his thought to a higher power or the Absolute and begins to expect a miracle for his emancipation. The grace of God depicts a selective procedure, which cannot enable man to be himself. To this end, it is a setback and disservice for man's quest for authenticity without which true liberation for progress will be impossible. This situation leaves us without option but to fall back on the ontological foundation of man's restlessness. It is grounded on man's essential nature, which is nothing but the ontological structure of man.

Earlier, Heidegger has highlighted a number of ontological concepts such as guilt, objectless anxiety, anticipatory resoluteness or the Dasein in man, which precipitates man's fundamental insecurity. These concepts are expressed through existential philosophy. We need to examine the existential import of Dasein. What is Dasein? Heidegger made human "Dasein" the starting point of his analysis of Being. He was not keen on the perceptible things in reality. He observed that the ontological structure of Dasein was neither contemplated nor analysed by the Greeks or ever since in later philosophical tradition. His effort in this connection, is to analyse the "existentialis" and the "existentialistic" structure of human Dasein in a way in which the Greek thinkers developed the "categories" of a thing that is (Heidegger, 1949:15). Human Dasein became for Heidegger a new perspective to understand the problem which has suffered a metaphysical oblivion. In this analysis, Heidegger realized that "Dasein" which had similar meaning with "human life is the ontological difference. "Dasein is always my

own Dasein". It cannot be ontologically grasped like other beings and this constitutes a source of difficulty for an adequate exposition.

Heidegger also observed that of all things that are associated with beings, it can be stated that they are of a special "genus" example a house or a tree and that, they have special qualities **(I bid pp14-15)**. What he is emphasizing is that, we can always ascertain the essence of the objects mentioned. On the other hand, the characteristics of "Dasein" are not qualities but possible manifestations of Being. The term "Dasein" Heidegger maintains, is to express not the human essence but its Being, which in this case implies "Being there." Being there in existential parlance means existence and this only applies to Dasein. Dasein is the only thing that exists, others things are. Existence therefore, has exclusive application to Dasein.

The significance of Dasein in Heidegger's existentialist ontology, is that, it provides a systematic approach to the understanding of Being. This is because Dasein is the only being that raises the fundamental radical philosophical question of Being. He made this position clearly as follows,

> *If the question of Being is to be explicitly formulated and carried through in such a manner as to be completely transparent to itself, then.... We must first give a proper explication of an entity (Dasein), with regard to its Being* **(Heidegger, 1967:26-27).**

The problem from where Dasein was extracted became the focus of Heidegger's existentialism. The basic features of Dasein are facticity, falleness and existentiality. Giving credence to this position Heideggger maintains thus,

> *Dasein comprises in itself facticity, (throwness) existence (projection)*
> *and falleness. As a Being, "Dasein" is something that has been thrown,*
> *it has been brought into its 'there' but not of its own accord* (**Blackman,**
> **1961:329**).

The technicalities of existential philosophy that are explained in this thesis are important because they help us to understand existentialism as a protest movement whose goal is to analyse human freedom and human existence. The import of the concept of Dasein in our analysis is to show that human "Dasein" or human life dominated Heidegger's explication of fundamental insecurity in man which is the basis of social and political instability. Plato's concern for the problem of fundamental insecurity is to institute social justice as an instrument to resolve a decadent social and moral order. What is the feasibility of Plato's conception of justice? Does it have the capacity to restore normalcy to a crisis ridden society? What then is justice?

5.2 PLATO'S THEORY OF JUSTICE AS A FOUNDATION FOR SOCIO-POLITICAL STABILITY

Justice as a philosophical concept is riddled with difficulties, especially, when we try to put it in a precise, unambiguous manner. In trying to articulate what it implies, we begin to see interpretations, which are sometimes coloured by the intellectual or social background of who is defining the term. It is against this background that **Ndubuisi**

(2005:44) stated that, justice as a concept could be seen from different perspectives. He maintained that there is hardly any definition that can exhaust the meaning of justice. Some writers have seen justice in terms of equity, while others see it as fairness. Justice has also been defined as legitimacy, something that is in agreement with laid down laws or principles. This kind of problem was raised by the pre-Socratic philosophers.

Anaximander, one of the earliest Greek philosophers, conceived justice as the ultimate principle tending towards the physical world. According to him, there must be an original element, a primary stuff from which all things originated. This primary stuff of reality in his view, cannot be associated with any of the things we know because, all the elements we know are in conflict with each other and if, any of them were the original stuff it would simply conquer and submerge the others **(Omoregbe 1991:4, Ophir, 1991:46).** Anaximander further contends that, this primary stuff must be a neutral element different from all elements we know. Based on this position, it must also be infinite, eternal and indeterminate. The conflict between the different elements was interpreted by him as a manifestation of this conflict as one element invaded the domain of the other. He maintained that there is a cosmic law of justice which establishes order and makes everything go back into that from which it came, into that from which things take their rise, and pass away. Once more, as ordained, for they make reparation and satisfaction to one another for their injustice according to their ordering of time **(Omoregbe, 1991:5).**

In his analysis of the primary stuff of the universe, Anaximander observed, that the various elements in the universe invaded the domain of the other and this act constitutes injustice. He sees a resolution of injustice as achieving to a cosmic law of justice which establishes order and restores conflicting situations. The notion of conflict as it affects justice was taken up by Heraclitus and Parmenides. Heraclitus, the exponent of the theory of perpetual flux contends that, justice is like a city wall which people should fight to protect as if they are protecting the wall. What he meant here, is that, justice should be protected from abuse, from degradation and from perversion. His reason for this thesis is that, justice is not stable but subject to distortion, segregation and the whims and caprices of those that dispense it. Parmenides, a contemporary of Heraclitus, and a philosopher of permanence, argues that, justice is a divine power, an agent of punishment and revenge which holds the interchangeable keys to the great folding doors in the gates of the path of Night and day. Once these gates are opened, a wide gaping space is revealed and then, crosses on the way towards 'Being and Truth' **(Ophir, 1991:46).**

The emergence of the sophists, a group of intellectual resourceful mobile teachers of rhetoric introduced a new perspective to justice. According to Thrasymachus, a leading member of this school, justice became the interest of the stronger over the weak in human society. This philosophy is comprehended in the thesis that might is right. The proselytizing attitudes of the sophists in the interpretation of justice as conventions based on societal values tended to relativize moral values. For them, different societies formulate their mores and values and are obliged to enforce them. Moral values to them, are unnatural **(Ozumba 2001:70).** This position was criticized by Plato who saw justice

as a collaborative effort between the three classes in society. In the *Republic* whose objective was the analysis of justice, Plato observed that, justice means that, each class should confine itself to its designated job, without interference. This will in turn promote harmony, peace and concord. Any interference by any group over another is injustice and is prone to crisis and instability. The basic tenet in Plato's conception of justice is one man one job based on the principle of the division of labour. Societal peace is maintained by a strict adherence to this stipulated condition.

The Aristotelian conception of justice as fair and equal is an improvement on the Platonic interpretation. Aristotle is of the view, that equals should be treated equally and unequals should be treated unequally. What Aristotle is saying, is that, in the distribution of benefits and burdens, equity and fairness should determine the mode of such distribution. People with different quantities should receive benefits or burdens according to their natural abilities in the hands of those that dispense justice. It is against this background, that we see justice as restoring a social or moral order. From the various interpretations given to the concept of justice, we could see that there is no universal conception of justice. The different interpretations are determined by the prevailing social and political situations in a giving context.

Giving the complex nature of man and society, the issue of justice has to be extended to all spectrum or perspectives in order to understand its complexities. This is, because, what one society might consider as right might be wrong for another society. From this point of view, a law which was originally promulgated for effecting a positive societal

defect sometimes in human history might be out-dated in the present circumstances, because, of change and innovation in society. The test of law and of political institution lies solely in expedience in so far as they meet the need for security and make mutual intercourse safer and easier (Sabine, 1973:34).

Eruvbetine (2002) captured the notion of justice in his concept of "Poetic justice." Poetic justice embodies the existence of a higher order of justice that is absolute and superior to what is available in our societies. Poetic justice is an ideal, an unstoppable force that governs the world by patterning all things in accordance with what is just and proper or what is beautiful in the poetic sense. When this supreme fairness is sometimes viewed as a divine instrument or associated with the law of Karma, its manifestation is perceived as transcendental (Eruvbetine, 2002:13). Eruvbetine maintained that it is generally accepted that, poetic justice entails the actual manifestation or revelation of a sure natural order that regulates the world and human affairs. As the ultimate enabling of a kind of even-handedness in lives of individuals and social institutions, poetic justice is said to be central to existence, making its untrammeled manifestation in truth and indeed a guarantee for a humane world (I bid p.13). From our observation, poetic justice tends to be patterned on retribution. Retribution as the name implies, is one of the theories of punishment. This theory stipulates that the cosmos is built on a moral order, to the extent that when an act of injustice is committed the moral order is distorted. To ensure a proper restoration of this imbalance, an appropriate punishment must be meted out to balance the equilibrium of the moral order in the cosmos (Omoregbe, 1991). The theory of retribution is comparable to the mosaic code of an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth.

It requires that a pound of flesh be taken from a victim who has committed a crime. Many criticisms have trailed the theory of retribution on the ground that, the criminal is not reformed to face the challenges of society. As a result of these criticisms, Bentham proffered a utilitarian dimension to the retributive theory of punishment. According to him, the motive of punishment is to reform the character of the criminal not to inflict pain. In this connection, he advocated the reformative and deterrent theories. While the reformative theory ensures that the criminal is reformed, rehabilitated and integrated into the society, the deterrent theory focuses on preventing the criminal from committing crime and also prevents would be criminals from doing so.

One cannot be sure whether any of these theories can contribute to a crime free society but an integrative approach of the three theories can influence tremendously a regulation of crime and promote a stable society **(Omoregbe 1991)**. It has also been observed even from the analysis of Eruvbetine, that individuals and society shy away from actualizing the ideals of poetic justice by either introducing cultural distortions into the belief that poetic justice is essentially otherworldly. He argued that, if, the human fate has been absolutely predetermined by divine or natural forces, then, it follows that man must remain perpetually helpless in the hands of the gods. The question now is, who is to blame for the inability of man to attain justice? Is this incapacity from man or the divine? We are of the opinion in this research, that man is responsible and not the gods for the perversion of justice. The perversion of justice by men is responsible for the promotion of inequality, corruption discrimination and discord in human interaction and institutional relationship.

In the light of this, it is imperative that if man has obligation for ensuring the realization of the true tenets of justice, then, it follows that, it is necessary to re-assess most commonly accepted human assumptions, beliefs and motivations that propel the perversion of justice. Fundamentally, Eruvbetine accepted poetic justice as having supreme fairness which is sometimes viewed as divine instrument perceived as transcendental. Before we examine, the act of finite transcendence as it relates to justice, it is necessary to see the role of justice as proper ends of societies. In this connection, **(Brecht 1959)** argued that among the proper ends of state and government, justice has been given a high, if not a top rank at all times. Two axioms have been identified and accepted without question first, that the government's own actions ought to be just, second, that government institutions such as law courts, ought to ensure the preservation of justice. Brecht, further maintains that, basic principles of justice were up to the beginning of the nineteenth century and in part even until its end, chiefly derived deductively from four grounds, namely

(a) Divine law (b) Some laws of nature which prescribe not only the movements of the heavenly bodies but also the proper relations between human beings.(c) Reason and (d) social contract constructed as the only justification for government (1959:136).

On a closer examination, it was generally observed that these four conditions or provisions failed to supply all the norms necessary to provide and preserve justice. To this end, law- making became a proper function of organized society. The question now is, has justice through a proper constituted framework of the law attained its ontological

grounding? The answer in our own view is in the negative. The concept of justice has become illusory within the context of our social relations. Why do we say so? **Barth, (1960:18-19)** has argued that Plato's theory of justice contains an ideological foundation of justification of a certain political and social order resting upon the dictatorship of the best. If this is the case, one may ask, is the only function of Plato's analysis an ideological, justification? Is it merely the expression of an existing or desirable social constitution in which the play of opposing forces and ideas have culminated in a state of relative stability? We have observed that, Plato's theory of justice is ontologically faulty and this accounts for the fact that although, we belong to a different age and civilization, the issue of justice still haunts us. Against this background, Bartt contends that, there is a limited number of problems which man in all ages has had to master and solve. To be able to take effective control of solutions to problems, he must frequently reformulate his relationship to the state, family, work, profession and property. Man must also give a definite form to those feelings which he believes touch upon the secret of the origin and in earning of his and the world's existence. He is required whether he wants to or not appear completely irrelevant to bring these relationships into some kind of order and human existence defined by the inevitability of this demand. This demand is a compulsion, a necessity but one which is directed at a free being. Man can respond to its challenges in one way or another, but in some ways, or other, he must satisfy its claim on him. Given a measurable – but limited number of natural relationship in life, which demands a permanent, lawful order, one may surmise that the possibilities of solving the problems involved are also limited. To this end, Plato's analysis of justice is incapable of enthroning socio-political stability.

5.3   AN ONTOLOGICAL BASIS FOR PLATO'S THEORY OF JUSTICE

The first question one is likely to encounter in an ontological presentation of Plato's theory of justice is, why ontology? Is Plato's analysis of justice not an ontological issue? Could we isolate Plato a seminal thinker and the father of philosophy? These questions are important because they tend to consolidate why an ontological basis is imperative in analyzing Plato's theory of justice. First of all, Plato's theory of justice is a product of traditional metaphysics. By traditional metaphysics is meant the attempt to see reality from one dimension without considering other points of view. A traditional metaphysician in this sense is one who insists that his own perceptive of reality is the only subsisting one. In other words, a metaphysician is one who boldly confronts the problem of reality in general with a particular aspect of what is **(Unah, 1996, 1997, 2002b, 2006)** In saying this, Unah exposed the major weaknesses of traditional metaphysics. According to him, a metaphysician is one who furnishes the ground for all other ontologies, that is, where metaphysics is taken in the strict sense of metaphysical Generalis (ontology). From a traditional perspective, metaphysics as an academic classification and as a branch of the philosophical system, its ultimate objective is the search for the double underlying the appearance of things or the ultimate principle that informs palpable reality. This position is precisely a metaphysics of Plato. For Plato, the hidden double of Reality (real Reality) are the ideas (forms), this makes becoming appearance or palpable reality a mere shadow, a photocopy or an illusion.

Before Plato, the pre-Socratics struggled for predominance on the basic stuff of reality. Substances such as water, earth, air, fire were paraded as the basic stuff of reality. Each

of these substances were presented by its exponent as what reality was made of. To make matters worse, Parmenides, maintained the position that reality is one and that it is permanent. This position is his famous dictum that "Being is" and non-Being is not. By being, he meant the "One", the "it is" following this position of Parmenides, non-being, change, alteration and plurality are illusory features of Reality **(Unah, 1997, 1998).** Heraclitus, a contemporary of Parmenides, proposed the theory of the state of flux as a reaction to the basic component of reality. According to him, Being is impermanence, meaning that, reality is in motion. A new dimension to this controversy, was introduced by Protagoras of Abdera when he assigned primacy to human subjectivity "of things that are that they are, of things that are not that are not **(Caig, et al 2000, Unah 2006).**

The emergence of Plato as a system builder consolidated the view that reality is one, absolute. This is contained in his view that the fundamental principle governing Reality is the idea. To this end, idea things are real while non-idea things are unreal. For Aristotle, Reality is fundamentally governed by mind or matter powered by the idea. To this end Aristotle is a classical materialist who holds the view that Reality is material and nothing else.

The consequence of the controversy surrounding the nature of Reality is the development of a form of thinking which identifies a principle of reality and reduces everything to that principle. **Unah (2006)** expressed this position when he stated that, with the Greeks and all the cultures and civilizations they have profoundly influenced, the mind set has crystallized that Reality must be one and knowable by a single knowing subject. The

outcome of this mindset led to the absolutization of Reality. Every thinker in western scholarship wrestled to produce his own absolute. Reality was placed on the dimension of one's viewpoint. Traditional metaphysics became an embodiment translated to, "my position, my perspective is absolute and every other opposed viewpoint would amount to a nullity **(Unah 1997, 2006)**. Consequently, the traditional presentation of metaphysics created confusion by treating aspects of reality and presenting such aspects as the entirety of reality. This presentation of traditional metaphysics resulted in the following problems.

i.   The presentation of aspects of reality as all there is in reality objectifies reality

ii.   The objectification of reality makes things rigid, creates a world of inflexible things ideas and people.

iii. A world of rigidity, inflexibility, inelasticity, created room for contest and conquest and the attitude of vengeance all of which sent being on compulsory leave or exile **(Unah, 2002 b, 2006).**

Our analysis so far shows that traditional metaphysics presents an objectification of reality. By this we state that the style of presentation makes reality as an object. As objects according to Unah, things become endowed with fixed attributes, as objects with fixed attributes things become perceptible, seeable in the same direction, categorical positions can be pronounced about things, about people, about places. Things are seen in the same way, they are seen objectively because they are objects. Any opposition to things and people shows a deviation and such persons expressing contrary views are seen as not objective because, they did not see things from a fixed attribute. Such a person

does not see things the way they are rigidly, inflexibly, inelastically fixed. Such a person may better be described as an exponent of shadows and illusions and therefore a propounder of negativities. This opinion happens thus; when a thinker decides that the idea of a thing is the true being then, he proceeds to establish in what way human experience and indeed the world can be organized with the principle of the idea, he tries to show that mind or idea governs the world **(Unah, 2006:10).** It follows from here that anything that falls outside this conceptual scheme is unacceptable and is therefore not part of the real world. Also anything that fails to conform with the parameter of mind or idea is not a true picture of reality and everything should be put in place either to suppress it, repudiate it, or if possible banish it. Such an environment of rigidity, inflexibility, inelasticity prepares room for contest, conquest, dominance and nurtures an attitude of vengeance and belligerence. This temperament, a characterization of traditional metaphysics, manifests in various human transactions and brings about conflicts, crisis and war **(Unah, 1996, 1997, 2006).** Unah, stated clearly that, when traditional metaphysical attitude is injected into the world, it results in various positions such as:

i.   Christ is the only way, the absolute access to divine salvation. Consequently, all non-Christ things (beliefs and convictions) are condemned to eternal damnation. Christianity thus becomes a regime of the absolute.

ii.   For the Moslems, there can be no secular state. Mohammed is the last messenger of Allah. The outcome of this, is that, in any set up where there are non-Muslims their presence is inconsequential. The precepts of the Quran become the constitutional provision for governance. The Quran supersedes

secular constitutions and takes pre-eminence in some contending issues. With this, an Islamic regime of the absolute has set in. In a state, where these two contending absolute regimes are holding sway, do we expect peace? Have we not prepared enough ground for war? These problems as enumerated above are major problems of traditional metaphysics.

Having X-rayed the problems of traditional metaphysics, how do they relate to Plato's theory of justice which is the focus of this research? Are we likely to achieve socio-political stability through this paradigm? What is Plato's theory of justice and how does it fall in line with traditional metaphysical thinking? Philosophical theories emerge in order to solve problems. Such problems can be social, political or spiritual. In Plato's case, he was reacting to the political and social crisis in his Athenian society. Against this background, **Momoh (1994:13)** stated thus, "Every philosopher has a programme, every philosopher has an agenda, every philosopher has a statement. Ditto for a nation, a class, a sect or a religion, it is the philosopher who is the intellectual spokesman either for good or bad, either positively or negatively."

No doubt, Momoh's position gives an insight into the propagation of philosophical theories. Different questions have been asked from antiquity to date but different answers have been proffered depending on the environment, culture, language and the vision, programme and agenda of the philosophers in question. The answers proffered may not have a universal acceptability but one thing is common, and that is, the nature and scope of the problem posed.

Against the background of Plato's analysis of justice, emphasis is on harmony, peace and concord through a perfectionist ethics. The reason for this in his view, is that man ought to be reformed in order to face the challenges of developing a complete personality to enable him restructure institutions and society for peace and stability. To achieve this, social justice should be enthroned in man and society. In the enthronement of social justice, Plato relied on his psychology giving due credence to the three parts of the soul which corresponds to the division of society into three classes. The first part of the soul he referred to as "Epithumia or lower appetite. This is located in the stomach. This represents the lowest segment of society. People in this class are mostly concerned with the satisfaction of their biological needs. Plato admonished that, if what is dominant in a man is this lower appetite, then, that man should cultivate it not in excess but in temperance. People in this class, should be workers, artisans or producers of the material and economic needs of society.

The second part is the highest appetite called "Thumos" located in the chest. In Plato's view, people in this class are mostly concerned with honour and dignity, they should be allowed to cultivate this, not with temerity but with fortitude or courage. These people should be "guards" or soldiers whose responsibility should be the security of society. They should defend the society against internal squabbles and external aggressions **(Plato, 1997:129).** The third part of the soul is called "Nous" or reason located in the head. This Plato observed as the rational part of the soul. As the rational part of the soul, people in this class are being controlled by their head and they should be allowed to rule.

As people who are always in search of knowledge, they should be guardians or philosopher-kings. They should be enthrusted with the administration of society. They should monitor the other two groups in society for effective administration. Plato maintained that if these three parts of the soul perform their duties without interference, there would be justice in the individual. This individual justice in Plato's view, would translate to justice in society. This type of administration by the guardians is popularly called "aristocracy" or the dictatorship of the best. How would this social stratification affect children of all the groups in society? Plato's recommendation was that, children should grow up in the respective groups where their parents belong, but, if any child proves exceptional, he should be given a place that befits his intelligence in society. What this means is that, if a child of the artisan distinguishes himself through academic excellence to have the potentialities of a ruler, he should be accorded the status of a guardian.

Plato was convinced that there would be justice in the individual and by extension in society if this inequality is maintained. With this social stratification, people would play roles where their innate potentialities lie without interference. This means that, the artisans should remain producers, the soldiers to remain guards and those that have demonstrated a high cerebral capacity as rulers should rule. How does Plato's theory of justice affect the educational development of the children of the three classes?

Plato recommended that the children from different classes should be allowed at the beginning to have equal educational opportunities. From this exposure, soldiers will be

identified, artisans will prove themselves and those with leadership traits will manifest through academic excellence or mental disposition. Any child that proves exceptional should be elevated to the class where his potentialities should be utilized to better society. This is the basis of Plato's theory of justice. This theory has positive consequences for political, social and economic developments. The theory recognised one of the oldest economic theories, "the division of labour" Division of labour encourages specialization by individuals where they are proficient. In Plato's theory of justice, he stressed the need for departmental excellence of the various classes that make up society. Division of labour in his view, encourages efficiency, promotes high productivity and also encourages the mastery of that unit of production where the individual specializes. Specialization encourages creativity and has potentials for promoting meritocracy and hard work. With this position, one would be correct to say that, Plato's theory of justice was a success but that is not to say that the theory is flawless. Various charges have been leveled against Plato's theory of justice ranging from authoritarianism, suppression of human rights and over reliance on the supremacy of human reason. To remedy these defects and make the theory suitable for the purpose of laying a solid foundation for social justice and political stability, an ontological grounding is necessary. Ontological grounding makes room for other points of view to be considered. What then is the ontological basis for Plato's theory of justice as a foundation for socio-political stability? What is ontology? According to Heidegger, the word ontology was coined in the seventeenth century. It marked the development of the traditional doctrine of the *essent* into a discipline of philosophy and a branch of the philosophical system. But the traditional doctrine was an academic classification and ordering of what for Plato,

Aristotle, and Kant was a question, though no longer to be sure a primordial one (Heidegger, 1959:41). According to Heidegger, ontology signifies the endeavour to make being manifest itself, and to do so, by way of the question "how does it stand with being?" (and not only with the *essent* as such).

For Heidegger, ontology is a radical philosophical method of presenting the question of being. It follows from here, that Heidegger's programme in philosophical scholarship is to push as far as possible the radical philosophical question of being. The problem of being preoccupied the entire Heidegger's philosophical enterprise. But what is being? Being, is what it means for something to be. Put in other words, being implies what there is. Since the study of being is the main business of ontology, what is the scope of being,? Is it the being of man or does it mean what it means to be a teacher, a student or a black man? For Unah, (2002b:1) ontology means, the study of being precisely as being. It means the study of pure being. Unah's position, categorically, asserts that, being in this context, does not refer to the being of X, Y and Z, but being in general. Being in general here, refers to what it means for something to be at all. Conclusively, ontology is the study of what there is (what it means to be or what it means to be at all). Heidegger's analysis of being is an attempt to distinguish two types of metaphysics, namely; 'metaphysika Specialis' and 'metaphysika Generalis'. As the names imply, 'metaphysika specialis' deals with the specialized sciences or regional ontologies for example, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Geography, Psychology. Each of these specialties studies reality in a particular region. 'metaphysika Generalis' or ontology studies reality in general. The problem traditional metaphysics created, which is an embodiment of Plato's theory of

justice, is that, claims are made that beings are studied in the guise of being. The traditional presentation of being was articulated by Parmenides in his famous thesis, "Being, the One is, and that, Becoming, change is illusion, for, if anything comes to be, then, it comes either out of being or out of non-being. If the former, then is already in being in which case, it does not come to be, if the later, then it is nothing, since out of nothing comes nothing" **(Copleston, 1946:76-80, Unah 2006:4).** The thesis of Parmenides laid the foundation for a monistic metaphysics. By monistic metaphysics, plurality was negativized. The thesis of Parmenides fore-closed the issue of non-being. In his view, what is fundamental is the "it is" the one, otherwise referred to as Being. It would amount to a contradiction in his view, to talk about being and non-being because, the fact that something is, and at the same time, is altered, is an embodiment of contradiction. This tradition of the absolutization of truth, is the fundamental problem of Plato's theory of justice.

The logical conclusion of his presentation is the objectification of justice which portrayed a straight- jacketed conceptual scheme. The objectification of justice by giving it fixed attributes made justice a rigid, inflexible and inelastic entity **(Unah 2002a).** The greatest problem here, is the suppression of human nature in order to comply with the status quo, man had to conceal his real nature and this is against the law of nature.

As a result of the suppression of human nature, intolerance and the violation of human rights, which Plato's theory of justice represented, the second type of ontology known as

phenomenological ontology becomes imperative as a social foundation for the actualization of socio-political stability.

What then is phenomenological ontology? How does it expose the fallacies of traditional metaphysical thinking?

Etymologically, the term phenomenology in its Greek meaning is a derivative of two words, *phenomenon*, which denotes appearance and logy (logos) which means theory or discourse. Phenomenology in this context, will mean the discourse on the phenomenon or the theory of appearance. The history of philosophy right from antiquity has been the study of the *phenomenon*. The notion of phenomenon has different interpretations depending on the orientation of the philosopher in question. For Plato according to Unah, phenomenon meant the tangible, the transient or the ephemeral aspects of reality **(Unah, 1996:205)**. It follows from here that, phenomenon represents shadows, copies or illusion because of its mutable characteristics. It is on this ground that, Lambert described phenomenon as the illusory features of human experience. Referring to Heidegger's conception of the phenomena, Unah stated as follows, "by phenomena is meant things, events or occurrences or as Heidegger puts it, the totality of what lies open for inspection or what can be brought to light" **(Ibid).**

Edmund Husserl (1859-1939) gave the term phenomenology a profound philosophical articulation. For Husserl, phenomenology refers to a theory of meaning, a transcendental philosophy, a presuppositionless inquiry, or a critical apriori research. Its aim is to enable us to grasp the essences of things. When he talks about the essences of things, he meant the meaning of things. Phenomenology viewed from this context, is a call to return to the

absolute beginning or genesis. For Husserl, phenomenon which constitutes the object of a phenomenological inquiry refers to objects as experienced by the transcendental self. It is from here that he posited that objects manifest themselves as they are. But there is a condition that will enable objects to manifest themselves the way they are. This is achieved when we purge and purify the self from bias, prejudice, pre-conception or pre-supposition. When this is done, we eliminate distortions that we experience in issues and events as they relate to truth.

For Husserl, only a purified ego can embark on the process of intuiting essences correctly. The process of achieving this absolutely certain knowledge is done through an eidetic reduction. This exercise involves a demolition because, the self detaches itself from the world. The demolition exercise is regarded by Husserl as the *Epoche* (cf Unah, 1996, 2002). The purification of the ego is rigorous, mental and intellectual activity which is given to a select few. Husserl's phenomenological project by its insistence on the purification of the ego before consciousness can be apprehended dovetailed into a metaphysical idealism with some catastrophic consequences. To ameliorate some of these problems, Martin Heidegger a student of Husserl propagated his version of phenomenology by laying emphasis on ontology.

In this connection, Heidegger posited that, ontology is possible only as phenomenology (Heidegger, 1962:50). This assertion is premised on the position that, phenomenology is the method of letting Being be seen in its own true light. To this end, a proper philosophical research will deal with the Being of entities or the meaning of Being in

general. Ontology for Heidegger will concentrate on the explanation of what it means for something to be at all. If this is achieved, ontology would have been able to make the Being of entities stand out in full relief **(Heidegger, 1962, Unah 1997).**

The meaning of Being in general brings us face to face to the fundamental question of philosophy. To this end, the analysis of the theme of ontology is one, which expects an utmost transparency or in the words of Heidegger, it is "one that must be treated phenomenologically" **(Heidegger, 1962:50)** Going further, Heidegger conceives phenomenology as a tool of inquiry appropriate to the theme of ontology which is Being itself. He puts it thus, "The expression, "phenomenology" signifies primarily a methodological conception" it is a tool of analysis which brings out and focuses on the core of the object of inquiry. What phenomenology does therefore, is to make beings or entities to be transparent in their own light. Being becomes the light which makes illumination of beings possible, the opening which enables beings come out of concealment into openness. In this connection, ontology becomes the "what" of the object of *philosophical research* while phenomenology shows how that *philosophical research* will be investigated. It is on this ground that Heidegger stated that, "phenomenology is our way of access to what is to be the theme of ontology, .. only as phenomenology is ontology possible" **(Heidegger 1962:60).** ontology grants us passage to the enabling, the light or the opening, the vehicle that ushers being into openness. It is in this regard that **Unah (2002a:28)** sees phenomenology, as the disposition, the orientation, the attitude of mind, which lets entities be seen in their proper light, and Being itself is the light, the Emergent power vehicle throws light on beings.

Consequently, ontology and phenomenology are structurally inter-connected. A proper analysis of ontology is done through phenomenology. From the foregoing, phenomenological ontology is equipped to analyse things the way they are presented to us without assumptions, presuppositions and predispositions. If this is the case, how do we now connect Plato's theory of justice to a phenomenological analysis? What becomes the ontological basis for Plato's theory of justice? An appraisal of Plato's theory of justice can be properly understood through the lenses of phenomenology. What is meant here, is that, justice is seen as a being. If it is a being then, it becomes a concept. If it is a concept, it means that, we should analyse what is presented to us. In this exercise, we look at the various dimensions to be able to see justice in its various interpretations.

This is a better understanding of the concept of justice. From this understanding, justice is disentangled from the purview of dogmatism, objectification and intolerance. In order to achieve the phenomenological foundation of justice, it is expected that justice be analysed transcendentally. This transcendental analysis will expose other transcendental structures of man which constitute a key foundation to socio political-stability.

5.4   JUSTICE AS A TRANSCENDENTAL EXERCISE

Controversies have trailed the concept of justice right from the inception of western philosophy. There has been an unending debate on not only what justice is, how it can be defined but its practical activity. The hottest period of this debate was the time of the sophists, who saw justice as an arbitrary social convention instituted by society. Before the sophists, the Pre- Socratic philosophers notably, Anaximander and Parmenides, laid the theoretical foundation for the analysis of justice.

Anaximander attempted to situate the predicate 'just' as it relates to justice in Greek philosophical discourse. In this discussion, Anaximander did show how the cosmological conception of an ordered universe amounted to injustice (Ophir 1991:46). In his view, the different elements that make up the universe are in conflict with one another because, they tend to submerge one another. This struggle is interpreted by Anaximander as injustice. He however, recognized justice to be the tool of re-ordering things to their respective positions.

Parmenides also, a pre Socratic philosopher, speaks obscurely about justice as a divine power, an agent of punishment and revenge, which holds the interchangeable keys to the 'great folding doors' in the gates of the path of Night and Day. Once these gates are opened, 'a wide gaping space' is revealed and then, crossed on the way towards Being and truth (Ibid p. 46). This presentation by Parmenides, for Ophir, is not only obscure, but also, did not bring justice to the plane of an ordinary man. There was also an effort that linked justice to a certain arrangement of space that limits man's access to truth. Heraclitus, approached the concept of justice from the province of law. Speaking about the law, he compares it to a city wall. He was of the view, that people should fight for the law as if they were fighting to protect the wall. In all these presentations, justice was seen metaphysically, poetically and needed a cerebral disposition for its cognition. This is part of the reason why this controversy of what justice is, remains a subject of debate.

The sophists in *Plato's Republic*, introduced a new dimension to the presentation of justice. Antiphon, a contemporary of Socrates, observed that, a man can best conduct in harmony with justice, if, when in the company of witnesses he upholds the edicts of nature. Following the position of Antiphon, Thrasymarchus, defines justice as the interest of the stronger. This is interpreted as 'might is right'. His position shows that, laws are made by the ruling class to protect their own interests and desires. Callicles, also a sophist argues that, justice is in the interest of the weaker over the stronger. His view is based on the position that the majority is more in number and can use their votes to achieve victory to the detriment of the strong. To an extent, both Thrasymarchus and Callicles are correct in their presentations of justice. Justice and injustice are two sides of a coin. Each is fighting to gain supremacy. This is why Plato's contribution is of contemporary relevance. In Plato's analysis, justice operates on the threshold of discourse, that is, it exists as latent discursive formation. It is there as an unarticulated knowing – how, before any question is asked about justice, all interlocutors already know how to talk about it and what they expect from that conversation (Ibid). An example here, is the dialogue between Plato and Polemarchus. Polemaechus had defined justice as doing good to friends and doing harm to enemies. This definition was unacceptable to Plato. If one does good to friends only, that is not justice. Other definitions are, keeping a promise, doing what is right, paying ones debts. All these definitions have loopholes. This made Plato to conclude that, justice is a surface – concept. This is because, the emergence of justice as a problem is a result of the growing tension between political reality and the available ways to reflect upon it. The political order in the time of Plato and up to the present day is characterized by injustice. In this connection, Plato does not

disagree with Thrasymarchus. The crisis and conflict which face society are so deep that not only property, well-being and life are in constant danger, but the human condition itself is threatened. It is the humanness in man which is at stake for Plato. At the core of the Platonic question of justice, lies an existential and political dilemma: should the city be radically transformed or ultimately forsaken for the sake of man? This question has been answered in the negative by a group of philosophers known as 'recluses' in ancient Chinese philosophy. These are people who escape from society in order to hide themselves away from the world. Describing the recluses, **Unah (1996:173)** referred to them as individuals who put emphasis on "personal purity". They also cared less about the world and its problems because they felt that nothing could be done to redeem the world. They accused Confucius for his apparent vain attempt to save the world. The position of the recluses shows that any attempt to salvage the world is an exercise in futility.

The view of the recluses amazed Confucius. For him, one should not act for the sake of success or failure. You act because it is morally obligatory for you to act. Success or failure is irrelevant to acting **(Ibid)**. From what Confucius said in response to the view of the recluses, Unah deduced that the recluses were defeatists, who thought that, the world was so bad that nothing could be done by anybody to redeem it. This view is not only fatalistic but reduces man to a passive spectator in the drama of human affairs **(Ibid)**. Man is an active agent not only in interpreting the world but also, in transforming it. This is why the view of the recluses is unacceptable in the struggle for man's effort to change the world. If man's objective is to change the world, how can this role be

accomplished? For Plato, man's moral regeneration, is better achieved through the enthronement of social justice. The problem we have here, is the fixed or objectified character justice has acquired over time. For us to make a head way, this dimension of justice should be radicalized in order to free it from this dogmatic trend. Plato had referred to justice as a surface concept whose definition is an unending one. This view has been given credence by **Raphael (1976:165).** According to him we call something just to express approval of it as being right in a specific way, but to pin down the specific character is not easy. Justice is a complex concept. This view is in line with this research because, from a metaphysical point of view, justice is a concept or a being. What ever we say that it is, is subject to revision or modification. It is not a fixed entity neither can we give it an attribute. In this connection, justice as a being becomes a transcendence.

Transcendence is the beyondness of being made possible by the productive imagination. It is the Voyage of the mind, the human mind, into the region of nothingness (**Unah, 1997,2002a).** "It is the act of projecting beyond this being to that being in order to connect them into stable regularity or meaningful units. It is the exploration of the wilderness of thought by human reason. In this Voyage of the mind, in this exploration of thought, there is always a movement from here to there **(Unah 2002a, 2006)".** For Unah, this form of movement implies a reaching out of something to something else, a passing over of something to something, a going beyond of something to something. He identified two activities here. First, there is something which reaches out or passes over to something. Secondly, there is something which is passed over to something else. That which reaches out, that which passes over, is consciousness. *Consciousness* becomes

central to cognition. It is the absolute starting point in any mental activity. According to Husserl, Human consciousness does not recoil to itself, it does not hide itself within itself. It reaches out, it passes over all the time, for it is "an outward-moving vector" **(Husserl, 1970:8)** It is against this background that, Hegel sees it as the "center of itself" **(Hegel, 1953:23-24)** From here, it follows that consciousness, thinking, mental passing over, mental reaching out, conscious going beyond is object driven. The capacity of consciousness or any mental reaching out at something is referred to as intentionality. Transcendence becomes a reflective mental activity grounded on consciousness. Whatever the mind reaches out to, passes over to or is conscious about is always a being. It is worthy of note that transcendence does not create a being neither does it create these beings that we are familiar with. Reason or thought does not create the object of its own intuition. These objects are given, they lie around, they are presence-at-hand **(cf Unah, 2002a:84)**.

Although transcendence does not create a being, it creates something. This something which transcendence creates or forms is an other-than-being, a nothing or a horizon within which objects are rendered accessible to the knower. It is from here that Unah offers another definition of transcendence. According to him, transcendence is the act of forming relations, the act of forming notions of connectedness, notions of unity, notions of universality and notions of homogeneity **(Ibid)**. Unah's position is an ontological reflection of human experience. What we encounter in experience is always in segments, in bits or in profiles. These scattered experiences are organized into meaningful and intelligible units through the act of finite transcendence. Man's capacity to connect one

thing to the other or his ability to organize his experience is inexhaustible. It is against this background that transcendence is about the native hunger in man which makes him restless, which makes him to move from one state of affairs to another, which makes him to project from now to not now, from what is , to what is not, from the known to the unknown. Transcendence is therefore, regarded as the business of ontology. By ontology here, we refer to going beyond beings to their Being. The question now is, how is this task accomplished? This task is accomplished through transcendental exercises. In transcendental exercise, we examine the various presentations or definitions of terms with a view to *noting* them or negating them.

Unah invents a better way to make this point clearer by examining the concept of justice. Grammatically according to him, justice as a concept is identified as a noun. *"The Webster's Dictionary of the English Language* defines a noun as a name of a person, place or thing. In this definition, justice is not the name of a person, or a place but a word. As a word, it can be called a thing". Once, it has been identified as a thing, it then means that it can be called a being. If justice is a being whether abstract or concrete, it means that any thing or any entity at all can attract this designation. Justice then, is not only a being but also one of the beings hence, an ontological signification is apparent in this analysis of the term. Giving the multiplicity of the notions of justice in every day discourse, it is no longer a word because, it has grown bigger than a word. It is better known as a concept. A concept here refers, to strands of inter-related ideas that are assembled together. Concepts and ideas are often used interchangeably. *The Webster's Dictionary of the English Language* defines concept as follows "Latin conceptus,

concerning, a thought ... that which is conceived in the mind, a general notion or idea, a conception. Extending this definition further to idea, it states, form, look, semblance kind, sort... A thought, conception or notion, an impression, a conviction, or opinion, a plan of action, an intention or design, a mental picture" **(Cayne, 1988).**

From these definitions, concepts provide a road map to the organization of thought, the pattern of thought, the tapping and utilization of our imaginations, the generation of images or pictures in human mind. The purpose of these activities manifest in ordering strategies which enable us to render experience, intelligible and understandable. Concepts, therefore, are necessary in transcendence. In the words of **Unah (2002a:9)** the nature of concepts is such that they unify the disjointed multiplicity or plurality. From here, one can appreciate why philosophical problems are conceptual problems. Conceptual problems are perennial problems because any attempt to resolve such problems results in endless debates as projections into nothingness . An exercise in nothingness is an exercise in finite transcendence. Relating the act of finite transcendence to the concept of justice, Unah tells us that the Greeks were the first in recorded history to dwell extensively on the concept of justice. The social and political iniquities in the Greek city states of old necessitated or created the need for the most cerebral amongst them to go beyond or transcend the unfavourable daily practices of man to the realm of thought or the domain of nothingness to fashion out, conceptually, principles that would regulate social and political behaviour **(Ibid p.86).** The analysis of the concept of justice by the Greeks transcended the realm of experience to the realm of thought where cognitive activities explore the region of nothingness to arrive at strategies

that would re-order and organize experience. Making this position clearer, Unah maintains that going beyond experience to the realm of thought and returning back to experience to improve and affect it with ideas gathered from nothingness implies a transcendence of beings to their Being. When a status quo is rejected with good reason or inherent difficulties and a problem is solved and a movement to the region of thought or reflection takes place, and such movement returns with ideas on how to improve the status quo, an act of finite transcendence or a transcendental exercise has taken place (Ibid p.87). Once a transcendental exercise takes place, the concept so transcended is enriched or perfected and ready to be used to improve or reorder a given system.

The different interpretations of justice as evident in Greek philosophical thought show that each of the interpretations presented some problems. Some of the conceptions will be out lined in order to show how they accomplished transcendental exercises. For Thrasymarchus, justice is the interest of the stronger. For Callicles, justice is the interest of the weak over the strong. For Plato, justice implies the departmental excellence of individuals in the productive process otherwise known as the strict division of labour. Justice for Aristotle is that which is fair and equal. Each of these interpretations is an improvement on the one that came before it. What is important here is that, in transcendental exercises especially with the concept of justice in focus, negation takes place. It can be stated categorically, that justice is not the interest of the stronger over the weaker, neither is it the other way round. To accomplish the task of transcendental exercise, we negate any concept we *not* it and come up with a better concept. In the final analysis, transcendental exercises show that reality no matter how it is presented is

temporal in character, not a finality. This suggests that whatever is presented as truth is time bound, limited and should be treated on its own merit. Transcendental exercise which the analysis of justice has shown has exposed the fallacies and contradictions of pursuing truth from a dogmatic and rigid fashion. The negation or the noting of a concept throws such a concept into the region of nothingness. Once a concept is consigned into the region of nothingness, a new concept which is better is always generated. Nothing in this case provides the source, the foundation and the possibility of actualizing the temporal character of reality. If reality is seen from this dimension, the world would have been a better place for humanity. It would also make peaceful co-existence possible. This brings this research to the mission of phenomenological ontology.

5.5 THE MISSION OF PHENOMENOLOGICAL ONTOLOGY

A mission refers to the aim in life, arising from a conviction or sense of calling. Every action or project one embarks upon has a specific mission. But whether this mission is achieved is a different ball game. In this regard, the mission of phenomenological ontology is to give the interpretation of truth a multidimensional character. Broadly speaking, ontology is classified into two major types, traditional and phenomenological. Traditional metaphysical thinking dominated the entire philosophical landscape and presented a one dimensional approach to truth.

The pre-Socratics introduced monistic metaphysics. By monistic metaphysics, reality was reduced to a single dimension. Plato did not deviate from this tradition hence he

reduced reality to the idea. The controversy surrounding the nature of reality as "One", the "It is", the Absolute laid the foundation for dogmatic metaphysical disposition. Traditional ontology by its procedure reduces reality to a single substance. In Unah's view, "with the Greeks and all the cultures and civilizations they have profoundly influenced, the mind-set has crystallized that reality must be one and knowable by a single known subject. The crystallization of this mind-set led to the absolutization of Reality" **(Unah, 1996, 2002a, 2006)**. Traditional ontology attempts to ground reality on a hardened position which manifests in know-it all, superior-holier-than-than attitude. It is the disposition of holding on to a viewpoint doggedly and dogmatically even in the face of superior and overwhelming evidence. In a situation where this temperament is in vogue, other viewpoints are not tolerated. Traditional ontology by presenting truth this way, has made conflict and the clash of temperaments a continuous process in society. Relating this position to Plato's theory of justice, mind or idea becomes a narrow metaphysical telescope with which to analyze the whole of reality. The more parochial we view reality, the more we create a more dangerous environment for humanity. This hardened position which results in the oppression, suppression and the repudiation of opposed view points constitute the strength and weakness of traditional ontology which is the hallmark of Plato's theory of justice.

It is against this backdrop that **Unah (1996:38)** observed that extremism-the hardening of position-as a form of neo-metaphysicism makes man the master, the repudiator, the overlord of his fellow man, and a pathological reactionary. In a nutshell, traditional metaphysics is understood as an academic classification and a branch of the philosophical

system. Its mode of investigation is such that, it objectifies Being in a manner that amounts to a conceptual freezing of experience **(Unah, 1997).** The objectification of Being, implies that traditional ontology treats Being as entities or objects with fixed attributes. Once Being is given this kind of interpretation, it means that any mortal who sees it differently is not only blind but lacks an objective assessment of an issue or event. As a result of this shortcoming of traditional ontology, the second type of ontology known as phenomenological ontology becomes necessary in order to present reality as it is in itself.

Edmund Husserl (1859 – 1938) a mathematician and a philosopher developed phenomenology as a descriptive analysis of human experience. For Husserl, phenomenology is concerned essentially with the essence of thinking. The essences of things here depict their true nature, their unchangeable characteristics or their ontological status. It shows the universal character applicable to all objects of experience.

The Husserlian concept of phenomenology is hinged on the principle of intentionality. This principle demonstrates that human thinking gravitates towards an object. This object directedness of thought makes the mind to function at full capacity for the attainment of this objective. Husserl stressed this point thus:

> *Like perception, every intentional experience – and this is indeed the*
> *fundamental mark of all intentionality – has its "intentional object" ...*
> *its objective meaning. Or to repeat the same in other words. To have*
> *meaning, or to have something in mind", is the cardinal feature of all*
> *consciousness, that on account of which it is not only experienced*
> *generally but meaningful .. (Husserl, 1969: 261-262).*

Husserl by this position, is emphatic that thought is object-directed. Whenever we are conscious of any particular experience, it is based on a given object. Consciousness or thought becomes the starting point of phenomenology for Husserl. It might be incumbent on us to characterize phenomenology as a philosophical exercise. For Maurice Merleau-Ponty phenomenology is the study of essences or an effort to define an essence. As a philosophy of essence, it maintains the position that man and the world could best be understood only on the condition of a return to the starting point of cognition. The novelty of phenomenology is that it emphasizes the phenomenological attitude more than the natural attitude in our efforts to attain cognition. To this end, it is a transcendental philosophy. As a transcendental philosophy it starts from a pre-suppositionless point when analyzing an object of experience in order to grasp its essence. How is this exercise possible?

There are three methods of accomplishing the phenomenological exercise according to Husserl. To be able to tap from the resources of human experience, it is expected that the phenomenologists carries out what Husserl calls "eidetic reduction" by putting in bracket all the assumptions concerning an object under investigation and focus on the essential structures of such object. With this effort, the essence of such object will be grasped. The eidetic reduction is further achieved by what Husserl calls "phenomenological epoche". By this concept, he implies setting aside, bracketing or putting into parenthesis of all previous beliefs, predispositions abut the object of investigation. With this approach, we would have divorced ourselves from prejudices and assumptions as we could now see the object of investigation in its true nature.

The two stages we have described so far are in the realm of phenomenological reduction. The advanced stage of phenomenology was referred to by Husserl as transcendental reduction. At this stage, the phenomenological ego becomes a transcendental ego and automatically is detached from the empirical world. In the transcendental reduction according to the Husserlian paradigm, the phenomenologist must suspend the empirical world as well as his natural self in bracket. It is only when this is done, that the transcendental ego would emerge **(Unah, 1996: 212).**

The stage of the transcendental ego if viewed critically collapses into Platonism and by extension the world of Forms. At this stage, the phenomenological attitude dominates the natural self for the purpose of intuiting reality the way it is right from genesis. We would begin to intuit the essences of things as far as reality is concerned. This is where we begin to see the essences of justice, beauty, courage, temperance goodness and all that pertain to human perfection.

Transcendental reduction as conceived by Husserl has been criticized by existentialist philosophy on the ground that detaching the ego from the empirical world would do havoc to the human being. "The ego from the point of view of the existentialists is essentially a subjective ego, and to elevate it over and above the world or to raise it to the level of transcendentalism, is not only an impossible task but a betrayal of man's desire to be God" **(Unah, 1996: 214).**

Husserl's aim in transcendental reduction is to attain absolute knowledge. It is the same target that Descartes aimed at achieving. The question now is whether there is anything like absolute knowledge. If through the Husserlian model we attain absolute knowledge, man's effort in projection of state of affairs would be a futile exercise. Objective knowledge exists no doubt, and we think, that is our limit. Man is making bold efforts to control his environment through creative thought and this is a continuous exercise. The various discoveries in science and technology to improve the well-being of man is a pointer to this effort of creative thought.

We could see how Husserl through the phenomenological reduction elevated thought to a high level. The phenomenological attitude which he recommended in terms of attaining absolute knowledge is within the platonic metaphysics. This platonic background was recognized by William Dilthey who described him as a true Plato (**Spiegelberg 1975: 134**). The natural self-represents Plato's world of the senses, while the phenomenological attitude, represents Plato's world of Forms. The call for the transition from the natural standpoint to the phenomenological standpoint is comparable to Plato's allegory of the cave in the *Republic* where the exit from the cave to the outside world led to epistemological salvation (**Owolabi, 1996: 297**). The dual world of Husserl, also, compares to the dual world of Kant of phenomena and noumena. The world of appearance refers to the empirical world, while the noumena refer to the Platonic world of Forms whose access is through reason.

In Unah's rendition of Heidegger, philosophy in its ultimate essence is a universal phenomenological ontology of man, that is, a radical understanding of the Being process, a glorious articulation of chaos and the fulfillment of nihilism **(Unah, 1996:38).** Phenomenology is the orientational habit of letting things stand out clearly as they are without prior conceptual prejudice or reification that is, the habit of letting things appear in their natural light regardless of whether they make us happy or sad. According to Unah, "by culturing us to let things be and by teaching us to show respect for every existent and every point of view, phenomenological ontology provide the intellectual ground for the blossoming of the liberal temper which in turn is the ennobling of man.

The liberal temper makes man the shepherd of Being or the guardian of his fellowmen." It makes man listen to others and not to himself alone. But how is this all important culture inculcated? Martin Heidegger the master ontologist tells us that ontology is possible only as phenomenology. This is because, ontology is the study of Being . The object of philosophical research is the "Being of entities or the meaning of Being in general". But, "the task of ontology is to explain Being itself and make the Being of entities stand out in full relief" **(Heidegger, 1962:49).** According to Heidegger, even before hand, the theme of ontology (i.e. Being itself) has suggested its method of research. When the meaning of being is spoken of, the fundamental question of philosophy is revisited. As a result, the treatment of the theme of ontology is one that demands utmost transparency or as stated by Heidegger, it is one that must be treated phenomenologically **(Ibid p.50).**

On further reflection, Heidegger conceives phenomenology as a tool of inquiry appropriate to the research on being. According to him the expression 'phenomenology' signifies primarily a methodological conception. It is a tool of analysis which reached out to the core of the object of inquiry. **Unah, (1997)** agrees with this position when he stated that phenomenology makes beings or entities to be transparent in their own light. Being therefore, acts as a source of illumination by illuminating beings or entities. By this, Being becomes the opening which makes beings come out of concealment into openness. Two activities take place here, ontology points to the whole of the object of philosophical research, while phenomenology signifies the "how of that research". On this ground, Unah describes ontology as the fundamental discipline of philosophy pointing out the theme of ontology as Being in general. A proper delimitation of Being is not likely to be accomplished using the conceptual tools of traditional metaphysics rather, it has to be studied phenomenologically.

The mission of phenomenology among other things is to show us the nature of things without forcing them into our ready-made conceptual schemes. Phenomenology exhibits as much as possible the general profiles of Being without our assumptions or prejudices. This orientational attitude has hidden to the proposal of Husserl, "back to genesis" (to the things themselves). Highlighting the characteristics of phenomenology Heidegger echoes it thus:

> Thus "phenomenology" means... to let that which shows itself to be seen from itself in the very way in which it shows itself from itself. This is the formal meaning of that branch of research which calls itself "phenomenology". But we are expressing nothing else than the maxim formulated above "To the things themselves" thus the term

"phenomenology" is quite different in its meaning from expressions such as "theology" and the like... The word merely informs us of the 'how' with which what is to be treated in this science gets exhibited and handled. To have a science of phenomena means to grasp its objects, in such a way that everything about them which is up for discussion must be treated by exhibiting it directly and demonstrating it directly (Heidegger, 1962:58-59).

What Heidegger is saying in effect here, is that, phenomenology is cultured to display entities precisely the way they are. For him, this is Husserl's clarion call that when entities are displayed without our pre-conceptual scheme, then, this call has been heeded and phenomenology becomes our way of passage to what is to be the theme of ontology, hence "only as phenomenology is ontology possible" (Ibid). It follows from here that ontology and phenomenology are interconnected. This connectivity is fundamental, because, while ontology directs us to the what of the entity in question, phenomenology shows the how. An inquirer who goes on looking for phenomenology when he has studied ontology will commit what Gilbert Ryle calls "a categorial mistake". Assuming a visitor comes to the university of Lagos, he is taken round the library, senate house, classrooms, laboratories and still asks, where is the University? The various departments mentioned show how the University is organized. Anybody who sees all these and begins to ask where is the University wastes his time. Conversely, phenomenology is ontology because both of them are connected. How now do we connect phenomenology with ontology? If something is revealed or opened in its concealment do we need phenomenology to disclose that thing again? What it means here is that entities are concealed with an outright disclosure. Sometimes an entity presents itself differently from what it is. We call this situation semblance. On the other hand, something may

show itself the way it is, in this case, we refer to such a situation as manifest. Phenomenology recognizes the ability for something to show this double signification. This is different from the distinction of appearance and reality in traditional metaphysics. For phenomenology, the way something appears to us is the way that thing is in itself. If we are able to see something the way that thing is presented to us, then, it is possible to describe what we have seen. The question now becomes, what is it that phenomenology displays or exhibits for inspection? What is it that can be called a phenomenon in the genuine phenomenological sense? What is it in its very nature that becomes an issue whenever we let something be seen clearly as it is in its true light? On a realistic note, phenomenology as a potential tool for lighting up what is obscure or for disclosing what is hidden cannot illumine what is already illuminated. It cannot display what is already displayed nor can it exhibit what is already exhibited.

In his own analysis, Unah observed that there is something, though admittedly not an entity, that lurks around whenever an entity has been brought to its lime light. This something of which we speak remains veiled, occasionally showing itself in disguise sometimes completely forgotten, sometimes taking on an embarrassing self-evidence that entrenches its forgotteness but which, paradoxically, demands that it becomes a phenomenon in an egregious sense **(Unah, 1997).** According to Unah, it is this distinctive "something" that phenomenology should let us see clearly in its own true light. It is this something that phenomenology must take up as the theme of its research. This something he continues is the absolutely fundamental phenomenon of phenomenological research- which grants both the light that lights up, the entity that is

lighted up and the process of lighting up itself is what Heidegger refers to as the Being of entities. He describes the Being of entities like this

> *... It is something that proximally and for the most part does not show itself at all: it is something that lies hidden, in contrast to that which proximally and for the most part does show itself, but at the same time it is something that belongs to what thus, shows itself and it belongs to it so essentially as to constitute its meaning and its ground. Yet that which remains hidden in an egregious sense or which recognizes and gets covered up again, ... is not just this entity or that but rather the Being of entities* **(Heidegger, 1962:59).**

Heidegger confirms that it is this Being of entities that phenomenology should anchor its research. The business of ontology is to investigate the Being of entities or any being whatsoever. This is how the connection of ontology with phenomenology is made possible. To this end, phenomenology then, becomes our way of passage to what is to be theme of ontology. Hence "only as phenomenology is ontology possible" **(Ibid p.60).** Only phenomenology grants us passage to the enabling, the light or the opening which brings beings to light. Phenomenology in this regard becomes "the disposition, the orientation, the attitude of mind, which lets entities be seen in their proper light, and Being itself is the light, the Emergent power which throws light on being. This is how phenomenology becomes ontology and ontology phenomenology" **(Unah, 1997:18).** Although, ontology and phenomenology are structurally interconnected, there is a deliberate effort to delimit the two spheres based on their subject matter. This delimitation is brought out in this way by Unah's rendition of Heidegger:

> *Phenomenology is the science of the Being of entities – ontology ... Ontology and phenomenology are not two distinct philosophical disciplines among others. These terms characterize philosophy itself*

with regard to its objects and its ways of treating that object (Unah, 2002c:31-32).

Phenomenological ontology as Heidegger presented it has drawn a serious query. The query is to this effect :what is novel about Heidegger's phenomenological ontology? The novelty according to Unah is that his letting-be-seen of the Being of beings had to proceed through the "hermeneutic" of Dasein's finite essence that is, the ontological analysis of "there being" or what loosely speaking might be called the being of man. Phenomenology becomes the phenomenology of Dasein – an interpretation of the basic structure of Dasein as a precondition for the ontological study of other entities – and ontology becomes a fundamental ontology which focuses primarily and mainly on the being of man with a view to renewing the question of the meaning of Being in general (Ibid p.32). If Heidegger has consistently maintained that ontology is phenomenology, does it follow that there is no difference between the two? The crux of the matter is that, not all forms of ontology proceed through the existential analytic of Dasein. This makes Heidegger's phenomenological ontology unique. Existential analytic of Dasein is fundamental ontology. It forms the basis of every ontology and of all the sciences. Its only possible method is the phenomenological one, whatever displays itself as what it is, is a "phenomenon" This means that phenomena are not appearances as traditional ontology posited. Phenomenological ontology in this sense is hermeneutics and is applied to existence in order to reveal its structure. It is on this ground that Heidegger sees philosophy as a universal phenomenological ontology proceeding from the hermeneutics of human existence, the analysis of existence which follows out the thread of all philosophical inquiry to that foundation from which it originates and which it must

always return **(Bochenski, 1956; Okoro; 2006, Unah, 2006)** Heidegger's phenomenological ontology provides the foundation of a universal ontology for the analysis of human existence. This novelty of entities displaying themselves the way they are naturally cultures man to patiently and attentively see things the way they are without distortions and obscurities. The universal mission of phenomenological ontology is the disclosure of the concealed aspects of human reality. No matter how we are affected by this disclosure, it is obligatory on phenomenology to carry out this task. Phenomenological ontology breaks the barrier or the wall of partition to which western traditional metaphysics has imprisoned humanity.

Phenomenological ontology, a radical ontology of man, metaphysics of man or a philosophy of man, presents all aspects of the transcendental structures of man, which are fundamental in the actualization of socio-political stability. According to **Unah (2006)** the presentation of these elements of finite human reason, which makes it possible for man to reason metaphysically, is a reinvigoration for the establishment of the objectivity factor without which objective experience would not be possible. It also shows how metaphysics in the first sense is possible, how to resolve the confusion in the house of being and how to make man more truly metaphysical and more truly human **(Ibid p.10).**

A metaphysical being in the true sense of the word is a liberated man thoroughly equipped to face the multifaceted predicaments of human existence. A being that is truly metaphysical is cultured to tolerance, to accommodate other viewpoints and above all to promote peaceful co-existence. These are the hallmarks of socio-political stability.

Plato's theory of justice, which is the focus of this research, is rooted on traditional ontology. The defect, which this research has discovered, is its impositional character. This defect manifests in oppression, and suppression of thought and is capable of promoting authoritarianism. It is on this ground that Plato's theory of justice led to a hardened position of what human nature should be. Consequently, his theory of justice as it concerns human nature, is reactionary and a consolidation of the absolute. Human nature does not manifest that way. Man is an eccentric being, a being in search of freedom. Any action that frustrates his attainment to freedom is usually resisted. This is where phenomenological ontology becomes imperative. It provides the intellectual ground for man to be able to listen patiently to others. It cultures us to analyze a particular segment of human experience the way it is. It does not matter how we feel. Phenomenological ontology, an action oriented philosophy prepares the ground for world transformation, because, it presents a multidimensional solution to human problems. These solutions are generated from the portals of nothingness made possible by the act of finite transcendence. As **Okoro (2006)** observes, what sustains existence as existence is the human prowess of transcendence that rises from nothingness, projects into nothingness and returns into nothingness. It is from this portals of nothingness that ideas are generated to transform the world.

Making this issue more explicit, **Unah (2006)** observes that the ontology of man, the metaphysics of man or indeed, the philosophy of man, seeks to establish the point that all of our activities such as building a house, studying philosophy, constructing a bridge, building a ship, building an airplane, forming a political system, a judicial system, an

accounting system or even a religious system are metaphysically guided and controlled by the power of finite transcendence, that is, the power of reaching beyond, the power of transcending this being, this state of affairs, to that being, that state of affairs. Phenomenological ontology viewed from this dimension, is the metaphysical determination of man's capacity and capability that grounds all creative activities. The lesson which phenomenological ontology teaches is that, analysis of concepts such as justice should be open-ended through re-casting, modification and elaboration to capture the temporal character of being. With the mission of phenomenological ontology outlined and explained, it becomes crucial to apply it to Plato's theory of justice with a view to situating it within our contemporary society, and within the ambit of relevance.

5.6 SUMMARY

The title Plato's theory of justice as a foundation for socio-political stability from the surface appears confusing. This assumption is predicated on the position that Plato set the stage for the presentation of ontology as a branch of the philosophical system (Sayre,1983:18-19). Granted that Plato is an ontologist, he made more contribution in the area of traditional metaphysics. Confronted with the philosophical problem of social and political instability, Plato relied on the world of Forms as against the world of becoming to lay a solid foundation for socio-political stability. This effort no doubt is commendable if we take recourse to the philosophers that existed before Plato. In addressing the problem of instability, Plato was of the view that justice should become the preferred instrument for the arrest and subsequent dissolution of instability. According to Plato justice in the individual and the state reflects a philosophical disposition of critical and

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rigorous mental contemplation. Justice when ingrained in the consciousness of the individual and the state will impact positively in the promotion of the common good. Plato from this dimension appears to be situating the theory of justice within the utilitarian tradition of the greatest happiness to the greatest number. In this connection, Plato's theory of justice is committed to the actualization of stability necessary for peace, progress and development. Plato's notion of justice was anchored on the division of labour which requires an individual or society to concentrates on those areas where they have comparative advantage for the provision of goods and services. Plato demonstrated this specialization of duties with his class rule namely; the philosopher-king as administrators, the soldiers as guards and the artisans as producers. This structure if maintained will achieve the much needed harmony and co-operation for the stability of the society. Plato's presentation of the theory of justice is quite noble but it has serious shortcomings because of the orientational outlook of traditional metaphysical thinking. Plato's theory of justice seemed to be anchored on the thesis of Parmenides Being is ,non-being is not. Being ,the "One" the it is, is what matters and becoming is an illusion of the senses. By this presentation of justice of justice in the fashion of Parmenides, justice has been clothed with fixed attributes. Justice has become an entity. This mode of the conception of justice has resulted in dogmatism therefore making justice rigid and inflexible. With this disposition the Greek civilization and those they influenced consolidated the regime of the absolute **(Unah,2006:3).** What is the way out? The solution lies in the second type of ontology which this thesis has subscribed that is, phenomenological ontology. According to **Heidegger (1962)** and **(Unah1997,2002)** "ontology is possible only as phenomenology". To analyze an issue or an event

Phenomenologically, such an issue or event must make an utmost disclosure for ease of analysis. This robust approach to the investigation of reality exposes all dimensions of reality with a view to achieve tolerance accommodation and peaceful co-existence. Phenomenology cultures things to stand out in full relief without prejudices, assumptions or preconceptions. Justice as a tool for the attainment of socio-political stability in Plato's view should not be fixed but through negation in the realm of nothingness generate richer understanding to actualize socio-political stability. This in a nutshell is the ontological basis for Plato's theory of justice.

CHAPTER SIX

APPLICATION OF PLATO'S THEORY OF JUSTICE TO OUR CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

6.0 INTRODUCTION

Plato's theory of justice poses a great challenge to our thought patterns. It shows that our minds are on holidays in terms of proffering solutions to human problems. This thesis is based on the social and political experiences he encountered in his environment. It was an environment of crisis, conflicts and wars which found expression in instability. His real concern was how to attain stability which is the basis of human happiness.

The question now is how can man attain stability in a world where instability appears to be ingrained in our consciousness? Giving our cultural and social diversities with their profound shortcomings and shortsightedness, what will be the tool of such solutions? One of the greatest challenges of the 21st century in global arena is the effective management of pluralism which in the view of this research is the basis for peace, concord and above all stability. Plato's theory of justice is capable of providing solutions to the endemic crisis in our confused world where human nature tends to play itself out to a full level. This research is of the view that the human mind is yet to be utilized. Another way to put it is to state that, the greatest problem of the human mind is the problem of capacity under-utilization. Plato's theory of justice therefore, is a clarion call for return to the basic elements of thought in order to equip man with possible solutions to human problems.

6.1 COMBATING CORRUPTION AND CENSORSHIP

Plato's Ideal State otherwise called his Communism put in place an effective check for combating corruption one of the worst vices that is destructive to society and development. In the Ideal State, the artisans or the workers were allowed to posses private properties but the auxiliaries or soldiers and the philosopher-king were prevented from doing same. Plato's reason for this recommendation according to the Republic is to forestall internal squabbles and to enable them to concentrate on their responsibilities and ensure development. The struggle for possession of private property is responsible for corruption and political instability.

Plato's vision on this matter has serious implication for Nigerian socio-political environment. Corruption has virtually crippled genuine development in the critical sectors of the economy. Its mode of operation is such that two or more people are involved towards its actualization. What then is corruption and how can it be tackled? Momoh (1991:115) argues that if there is anything which operates efficiently, uniformly and smoothly all over the country, it is the twin-engine of the machinery of corruption and bribery. The phenomenon of corruption in his view seems to be an unofficial ideology, our Lingua Franca, the universal language which is spoken and understood in every nook and cranny of Nigeria.

Omoregbe (1993:128-133) agrees with Momoh on the pervasiveness of corruption in both our private and public lives. According to him corruption has become a norm manifesting in kick-backs, inflation of contracts and embezzlement of public funds. The

consequence of corruption is seen in the struggle for power, authority and infrastructural decay.

Unah (1995:124-126,2002:67-70) grounds corruption on man's struggle for power and authority, ,greed and earthly grandeur. For Unah corruption is sustained and attractive in Nigeria because government is involved in the award of huge contracts in the vital sectors of the economy. Corruption has become a way of life a phenomenon that has been entrenched in our national psyche.

Azenabor (2007:3) defines corruption as an immoral or dishonest action or way of offering and accepting bribes (in cash or kind) or of using the power of one's office or position to enrich oneself. Azenabor offers the in another way thus: corruption is the use of power for profit or prestige, or for the benefit of an individual, group or class in a way that constitutes a lowering of the accepted standard. It implies taking advantage of one's position for personal gain or an abuse of office.

From the contributions made by Momoh (1991), Omoregbe(1993), Unah(1995,2002) and Azenabor (2007) one can deduce that corruption distorts the moral vision of Nigerian society. The emergence of corruption as a social phenomenon can be linked to the higher stage of our social and political development. Politicians and other public office holders see corrupt enrichment as a way of making provision for their families, relations and their cronies. With what they have acquired, they can act as god fathers, king makers and leaders of thought influencing policies and appointments.

Corruption no doubt is destructive because it promotes mediocrity thereby lowering excellence. It encourages inefficiency, low productivity and infrastructural decay as the funds meant for development in the critical sectors of the economy are diverted into private pockets. There is the need therefore to combat corruption in order to save Nigeria from total collapse. This is where censorship is imperative. The various agencies charged with the responsibility of combating corruption such as Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC) and Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) should prosecute offenders no matter highly placed. This is should serve as a deterrent to others and reduce corrupt practices.

CENSORSHIP: In Plato's ideal state, censorship was an instrument of control for literature, drama presentation and foreign trips among its citizens. The purpose of censorship is to restore the moral sanity of society. Moral carnage in Nigeria is getting out of hands and there is the need to effectively censor literatures, home videos and other theatre presentations in order to restore our moral values. Campaigns have been carried out on the need to concentrate on local contents in our print and electronic media in an effort to maintain a high moral standard. Unfortunately, the media has been accused of promoting decadent moral bankruptcy. Most importantly is the home video industry which has contributed in the debasement of our moral standards. Pornographic materials abound in some parts of the country for all kinds of people to buy without restriction. As a way of control, The Nigerian Film and Video Censors Board (NFVCB) should come up with strong regulations in order to streamline the productions of these films to reduce the

moral carnage in Nigerian society and our youths in particular. This research supports strongly censorship for the control of corruption and the redemption of our moral values.

6.2 THOUGHT AND CREATIVITY

From the perspective of this research, Plato's theory of justice is a mental revolution through the vehicle of ontology which Plato describes as dialectical reasoning. We have argued in this research that the theory of justice as Plato postulated needs to be ontologically grounded and situated before its potentials could be comprehended and appreciated.

Unah (1997) drawing an inspiration from Martin Heidegger, outlines two broad types of ontology within the realm of philosophy namely, traditional ontology and phenomenological ontology.

Traditional ontology according to him is metaphysics understood as "academic classification and a branch of the philosophical system". There is a problem posed by this aspect of metaphysics. This problem is exemplified in its method of investigation. "Its mode of investigation is such that it objectifies being in a manner that amounts to a conceptual freezing of human experience. In other words, traditional metaphysics treats Being as entities or as objects with fixed attributes" **(Unah, 1997:6).** He also observes that traditional metaphysics is pre-occupied with the "beyondness" of being to the extent that it seeks to determine the beingness of a being, the essentness of the essent or the thingness of a thing. The result of this is that it tries to unravel the hidden reality

underlying the appearance of things. Consequently, such a mode of inquiry ushers being into the portals of nothingness. The reason for this according to Unah is that outside the various profiles or aspects which make up a being, which make up an essent or which make up an object, there is nothing (Ibid).

From his position Unah's analysis of the problem of traditional ontology is lucid and unambiguous. It exposes the tendencies to dogmatism, fixism and fanaticism. In traditional ontology, the disposition is: apart from my point of view, no other exists. Such is the problem posed by the analysis of Plato's theory of justice as embodying concrete solutions to the problems of man and society. His theory of justice especially, his conception of the ideal state has been criticized on the grounds of being authoritarian, totalitarian and above all, dictatorial, all of which are characteristics of traditional metaphysical thinking. At this stage, one would develop a cold feet in an attempt to evaluate the positive aspects of this theory as capable of proffering solutions to political and social stability. On this position, let us listen to Heidegger as he tried to systematize western ontology after the eruption of philosophy into regional ontologies,

> ... *what is useless can still be a force, perhaps, the only real force. What*
> *has no immediate echo in everyday life, can be intimately bound up with*
> *a nation's profound historical development, and can even anticipate it.*
> *What is untimely will have its own times (Heidegger, 1959:8).*

The import of Heidegger's statement is that theories should not be discarded or rejected based on our prejudices, assumptions and presuppositions but, that, efforts should be intensified to evaluate them from their peculiar nature. What this means is that, reality is dissected in profiles and its understanding should not be seen from a straight-jacketed

position but, from the point of view of its multiplicity. This is where the second aspect of ontology, phenomenological ontology becomes strategic.

Heidegger maintains the philosophical position that ontology is possible only as phenomenology. What does he mean by this, and why does he prefer phenomenological ontology to traditional ontology? In a nutshell, ontology is the investigation of Being or reality while phenomenology is the methodology of letting Being be seen in its own true light **(Unah, 1997:8, 2006)**. This position is premised on the view that, the object of philosophical research is the "Being of entities or the meaning of Being in general." What is the primary task of ontology in this regard? In Heidegger's view, the task of ontology is the explanation of Being itself and at the same time make the Being of entities stand out in full relief **(Heidegger, 1962:49)**.

Ontology can be fully grasped with the method of phenomenology hence both are interconnected. Phenomenology therefore, becomes a tool for an ontological inquiry making entities transparent and accessible for understanding. Another way to put it, is that, phenomenology provides an enabling environment for entities to manifest themselves in their true nature. As a methodological conception, it demands transparency thereby, avoiding our previous assumptions, prejudices and our preconceived notions of situations. It demands the spirit of openness in our analysis of objects of experience. Above all, ontology elevates thought to an active, creative level in order to solve human problems.

Our analysis so far has shown the necessity of an ontological grounding of Plato's theory of justice. Man is always confronted with series of problems to which solutions are sometimes elusive. What this means is that, authentic solutions should be derived from an ontological dimension. Such a solution requires a high level of thought. In other words, the mind should be tasked at an optimum capacity for a fruitful result. Such a task is the result of Plato's theory. He came from an environment of social and political crisis, an environment where reality of the human condition is always in a state of flux. A careful examination of this permanent crisis of the human condition, was a source of worry to him. He recognized this problem and came to the conclusion that solutions to man's social and political problems cannot be resolved through the Heraclitean theory of flux . He saw the need to embrace the Parmenidean theory of permanence as a solution to man's social problem. On this position, he divided the world into the physical and the world of Forms.

The physical world is characterized by instability, change and illusory features of reality. All that takes place here is a resemblance of reality, copies of the original. On the other hand, the world of Forms is characterized by immutability or permanent features of reality. The world of Forms depicts the intelligible world where the essences of things are actualized. It is a world where reality exists in its perfect form. It is the ideal world, a world that remains the same, an immaterial world an indestructible world. It is a source of all creative activities aimed at attaining human well-being. Plato has maintained in the *Republic* that getting to the world of Forms is made possible through dialectics. The concept of dialectics here, depicts metaphysics. Using dialectics to attain the world of

Forms for the purpose of intellectual intuition is seen by Plato as the zenith of philosophical cognition. The reason for this is that attaining the form of Good is the end of intellectual progress (*Republic* 1997:246).

The Form of the Good is the central Form in which all other Forms participate. The form of the Good is the source of the being of all other Forms and it surpasses them all. Not only is it the source of being, it is also the source of light that illuminates all the other Forms. It is like the sun from which light goes out, and the unifying principle that unites all other Forms **(Omoregbe, 1996:140)**. From here, we could see the importance of the Theory of Justice as the pivot of Plato's metaphysical, epistemological and ethical postulations. Philosophical theories and analysis are committed to solutions of human problems. What is fascinating about the theory of justice is that it is founded on abstraction which Heidegger identified as a fundamental metaphysical problem. He suggests that the problem of nothingness" really understood, is intimately and inseparably connected with the problem of "Being"; and actually, that we rise to the problem of "Being" only, if we have faced the problem of "nothingness" **(Heidegger, 1949:203)**. In the analysis of the problem of nothingness, he shows clearly how the concept of Being has not only been trivialized but forgotten. An examination of nothingness is seen by him as a revival of the problem of Being which was the foundation of the tradition of Western philosophy.

The concept of nothing seems to present a negative character of reality but in a more technical ontological dimension, Heidegger sees it as the unthought element of thought.

By this he meant, that aspect of reality which provides the foundation of the basic metaphysical question. In it lies man's power of articulating metaphysical questions in terms of presenting other possibilities to solutions to human problems. One basic characteristics of nothing is that in it we create or develop something. From this position, we could see that nothing though exemplified by void or negation constitutes the grand norm of what is. It is the raw material which can be translated into concrete reality. This is where there is an interconnection between Plato's theory of justice and Being. It is also a glaring contribution of Plato to Western development in Metaphysics.

The question that is always asked by those who are researchers in Plato's theory of justice is, what is the philosophical consequence of this theory? The world that is familiar to us is the physical world, the world of day-to-day reality. The world of Forms, a metaphysical creation, presents some difficulties because, it is not a world we can grasp. If this position is anything to go by, it means that an analysis of the Platonic world of Forms may be an exercise in futility. But beyond all these, it is a theory that challenges the capacity of the human mind to investigate ultimate reality with a view to solving the problems of man and society. Our first task in this research, is to examine the inner abilities of thought in terms of its capability and dynamism in solving human problems.

First of all Plato is a rationalist. This grounds his philosophy in general, and his theory of Forms in the rationalist tradition. His theory of Forms basically found fulfillment in reason as an authentic source of human knowledge. Rationalism is a philosophical

outlook which gives preference to the a *priori* rather than the *a posterior*. What we are saying here, is that, genuine knowledge is attained independent of experience. In articulating the theory of Forms, Plato relied heavily on reason. As **Lacey (1976)** observed, reason is a general faculty common to all or nearly all men, and sometimes regarded, either seriously or by poetic license, as a sort of impersonal external power. According to him, this faculty are of two sorts, a faculty of intuition by which one "sees" truths or abstract things (essences or universals) and a faculty of reasoning, i.e. passing from a premise to a conclusion (discursive reason). Lacey's observation is a pointer to the fact that reason is a human quality and in our process of cognition, the mind is able to intuit abstract or what he refers to as a universal truth or the essences of things. This position places Plato's theory of Forms in perspective. In his theory of Forms, thought is reactivated in order to function at full capacity. Thinking therefore, is an activity of the mind which is the basis of Plato's theory of Forms. In thinking, the mind is able to make connections of abstract entities into a meaningful unit. To appreciate the importance of thinking in philosophical analysis as it relates to Platonism, we will examine the works of modern philosophers Descartes and Heidegger.

Rene Descartes a modern Plato identified thinking as an attribute that belongs to him, it alone cannot be separated from me. 'I am, I exist, that is certain' **(Descartes 1997:141)**. Descartes arrived at this postulation during his systematic doubt whose objective was to place knowledge on a solid foundation. What we can deduce from his famous maxim, I think, therefore, I exist, is that thinking is the basis of existence. The moment we cease to think, we are likely to stop existing. He made this clear when he said, "For it might

possibly be the case if I cease entirely to think, that I should likewise cease altogether to exist. I do not now admit anything which is not necessarily true: to speak accurately I am not more than a thing which thinks, that is to say a mind or soul, or an understanding, or a reason, which are terms whose significance was formerly unknown to me. I am, however, a real thing and really exists; but what thing? I have answered: a thing which thinks **(Descartes 1997: 141-142).**

From Descartes position, we can see that thinking has become the pivot of the mind. The mind has thinking as its essence. Therefore, thinking has become crucial not only as a human quality but the essence of man. If we relate it to Plato's theory of Forms, we can see the primacy of knowledge to opinion. Plato demonstrated this in the *Republic* when he said that those who rely on opinion in place of knowledge are to be called philodoxical rather than philosophical *(Republic* 1997:187). The point Plato is making here, is that opinion demonstrates our cognitive process. In our view, it does not mean that opinion should not be respected but we have to go beyond opinion to establish knowledge. Such knowledge must be justified through concrete evidence. This position is important because many things we claim to know are in some cases hearsay, which is not far from the realm of opinion. Stressing the importance of thought, Descartes asked, But what then am I? "A thing which thinks". The question now is what is a thing which thinks? He answered, it is a thing which doubts, understands, conceives, affirms, denies, wills, refuses, which also imagines and feels **(Descartes, 1997: 143).** From this position therefore, thought becomes a tool of attaining goals, articulating and bringing together disjointed views or issues. Thinking now begins to penetrate the depth of abstract

qualities in order to reach their essences. In this direction, nothing is impossible as far as reality is concerned. What we need do is to give our mind the task of reaching a height in cognition. Some people term this exercise a speculative activity but it is not because, thinking becomes an intentional act. As an intentional act, it is directed towards an object. The foundation of the analysis of Descartes on consciousness is basically Platonic.

How does this relate to political stability which is the object of our research? Experience has shown that the factors that promote political instability are rooted in social injustice. This is, because, many things are taken for granted in the empirical world. The effort by a reliance on the platonic world of Forms as providing a solution to social and political instability is a return to man's capacity to think. Thinking in this perspective, will take us far beyond mere romance with problems that tend to destroy our society. The function of thought as Plato and his successors have presented, appears to be elitist but, it is also, true that getting gold involves digging deep. It is a challenge to reason which ultimately is a return to the beginning of man's power of cognition.

Examined from another perspective, thought has a strategic function in terms of proffering authentic solutions to our social and political problems. This perspective will be evaluated from Heidegger's phenomenological ontology. For him, true or critical thinking is not an activity performed in abstraction from reality. It is never man's ordering of abstractions simply in terms of logical connections. Genuine thinking is rather, man's most essential manner of being man. It manifests relation between man and

Being. In true thinking he maintains, man is used by Being, which needs man as the openness that provides the measure and the bounds for beings manifesting of itself in whatever is. Man in thinking, is called upon to lend a helping hand to Being. To this end, he refers to thinking as handicraft **(Heidegger, 1977:xiii).**

Thinking in Heidegger's phenomenological ontology marked a revolution because it is opposed to the old metaphysical thinking which does not give room to other possibilities. Thinking is not patterned along our pre-conceptual scheme rather, it investigates the object of our experience without biases. Thinking exhibits its craftly nature and that is why, it is regarded by Heidegger as handicraft. As a handicraft, it is an instrument of organizing the world. It creates meaning out of meaninglessness, stability from chaos and instability, orderliness from disorderliness. For the effective function of thought, language is necessary as a vehicle of communication. Heidegger puts it this way, "The way to thinking to a free relationship with Being lies through language. For thinking is man's according with, and responding to Being and language is the primal dimension" in which that responsive correspondence takes place **(Heidegger, 1977: xx).**

Elaborating more on the significance of language to thought, he stated that the proper function of words is not to stand for, to signify, rather words point to something beyond themselves. They are translucent bearers of meaning. To name a thing is to summon it, to call it toward one. To this end, he had called for a rehabilitation of language, with the restoring of its original potency. His reason for this thesis, is that, language is the

province of Being. He maintained that the reciprocal relation between Being and man is fulfilled through language.

We could deduce here that the original potency of language makes Plato's theory of Forms relevant. The reason for this could be seen when we evaluate language as a vehicle of thought. True thinking for Heidegger always remains a revealing, and one must follow where that revealing leads. The openness of his thinking shows to a large extent the possibilities of achieving great results. To show the extent Heidegger took thought as connected to Being, a commentator once declared, "where Descartes built glass palaces inviolable, and Hegel a mansion finished for all time, Heidegger builds as it were sand castles, ready to be reshaped or swept away in the next responsive on working of thought (1977:xxxviii).

Supporting this view **Unah (1997),** drawing inspiration from W.J. Richardson stated why Kant's mission was to establish human reason as the ultimate legislator for experience and to indicate finitude as the source of man's natural disposition to think metaphysically, Heidegger went beyond this to reconstruct the whole man in open, prayerful, relationship to Being as the source of intelligibility, the source of meaning, the source of truth and the source of value. Heidegger's fundamental ontology is aimed at interrogating the Being process with a view of exploring phenomenologically the Being structure in man which is the source of his natural propensity to metaphysicize (cf Unah,1997:36).

As a cerebral activity, thinking involves projection, intuition, and questioning all aimed at finding a solution to a given problem. The ability of man to metaphysicize is propelled by his immediate needs and perplexities. Metaphysics gives him that foundational impetus and the catalyst to fashion out authentic solutions for his problems. These solutions are inexhaustible. Man is only required to put his mind into the framework of ontology.

In one of his lectures titled, "The Question Concerning Technology," Heidegger stated, "Questioning is the piety of thinking". Piety here is used in the ancient sense which means obedience or submissiveness and in this case, submitting to what thinking has to think about. The object of thinking here becomes crucial in realizing the essence of thought. One of the exciting experiences of thinking is that, at times, it does not fully comprehend the new insights it has just gained and does not see them through. Such too, is the case with the sentence just cited that questioning is the piety of thinking. The lecture ending with that sentence was already in the ambience of the realization that, the true stance of thinking cannot be to put questions, but, must be, to listen to that, which our questioning vouchsafes – and questioning only in virtue of pursuing its quest for essential Being (cf .Hert, 1971: 72).

This is Heidegger's effort in the quest for Being and his phenomenological method in this adventure of Being. In this project, he called our attention to the utter neglect of Being as the cause of crisis not only in man as an individual but, the society as well. Thinking

therefore, is grounded on Being which grants man access to ontology. This is where Heidegger took thinking to a greater height through the vehicle of language.

Thinking as Plato conceived it is not done in isolation, rather, it aims at seeking solution to a given problem. It manifests clearly when man is pushed to the wall. Anikpo (1986) threw more light on this position when he outlined situations when thinking is applicable.

i.   Think in terms of specific questions and specific problems. By focusing one's thought on definite issues, one is able to achieve greater coherence.

ii.   One should not be contented with the first answers that come to one's mind. It is possible that such hasty answers may not be the final explanation to a given problem. One should be able to explore, the problem further by considering alternative answers especially those that contradict the first answer.

iii.   Learn to manipulate your mind to follow any line of thinking to its possible logical end.

The advantage to be derived from these conditions given by Anikpo is that it unravels the less obvious aspects of a problem. The conditions also offer order in systematic thought thereby making it intelligible. The rigour and vitality required for thinking as a human activity, are not easy to come by, and this makes thinking a difficult activity. On this let us listen to Anikpo once more. The most difficult exercise in life is thinking. Many people have given up thinking. Most of those who still do cannot do it coherently (**Anikpo, 1986:1, Unah 2006, Ogundowole, 2007**).

The reason why thinking is necessary in human society is that knowledge is an integrated process and as a process, it occurs in related sections and stages. One of the reasons for this development is that, the universe within and around which human knowledge is circumscribed has many parts each demanding special attention. The human mind therefore, through thinking is able to penetrate and in some cases demystify what is hitherto unknown. The result ultimately is to solve human problems for society to move forward. When successfully carried out, thinking results in human creativity. What do we mean by this? What conditions aid human creativity?

6.2.1 THEORY OF FORMS AND HUMAN CREATIVITY

Plato in the *Republic* holds that thinking is either a dialogue in the soul involving mental words that refer to forms, such forms as whiteness, humanity, beauty, etc. This is what **Uduigwomen (1998)** was talking about when he referred to autistic thinking. According to him, this type of thinking is shaped primarily by our inner feelings, motives and attitudes. This kind of thinking he maintains, is often called "imagination" creative thinking produces new information for solving human problems under an environment favourable for such activity. Human creativity encourages self-expression and provides rewards for originality. Human creativity therefore, provides the creative persons with originality, fluency, flexibility and inventiveness.

Human creativity from a philosophical perspective is a metaphysical production. The reason for this is that creativity is the effort of man to face the challenges of his immediate environment. It is man's propensity to metaphysicize. By this we mean that

metaphysics is ingrained in human nature. The moment the mind goes beyond the given the metaphysical spirit has been demonstrated. Creativity manifests in various forms of human endeavour such as arts, science, technology, architectural designs and musical compositions. Plato used it to develop his theory of the ideal state; Galileo watching the fall of apple from a tree developed the theory of gravitation. Thomas More developed his theory of "Utopia", which led others such as Simon, Owen to lay foundations for a socialist state. Underlying these theories is the fact that man at that point in time was grappling with the problems of his immediate environment. It means that man is not satisfied with the condition he found himself. The thesis of this research is that creativity which is a manifestation of thought is an attempt by man to be godly. The reason for this is that creative works aim at improving the welfare of man. To this end, it is in the interest of humanity.

According to Heidegger, true thinking is never an activity performed in abstraction from reality. It is never man's ordering of abstractions simply in terms of logical connections. Genuine thinking is rather man's most essential manner of being man. In true thinking, man is used by Being which needs man as the openness that provides the measure and the bounds for Being manifesting of itself in whatever is. Man in thinking is called upon to lend a helping hand to Being. To this end, Heidegger refers to thinking as handicraft (**Heidegger 1977: xiv**). How do we relate this to creativity? For Heidegger, the modern scientist does not let things present themselves as they are. He arrests them, objectifies them, sets them over against himself precisely by representing them to himself in a particular way (**Ibid p. xxvi**).

The implication of what he is saying is that man uses intelligence to control nature to suit his needs. All scientific creativity is the handiwork of man. But one may ask, what is the source of creativity? This research is of the view that creativity resides in the Platonic world of Forms. This view is supported on the ground that most of what we consider as creative works appear to be a copy of an existing reality. This agrees with Plato's world of Forms that beyond the world of senses abound reality in their perfect condition. What we do in terms of improving our existing concepts is to go to the world of Forms. This activity is a dialectical process made possible by mental projection. Alfred Northwhitehead a metaphysician and a process philosopher, lent credence to this when he said, that the psychical is the creative advance into novelty **(Whitehead, 1959: 12)**. The psychical here is nothing other than the mind. This statement is corroborated by Lillie (1959) citing Whitehead maintains that the mind is the source of creativity.

In his own contribution, **Sinnot, (1959) also citing Whitehead 1959** states that the following factors motivate creativity. They are memory, reason and imagination. He gave primacy to imagination which acts as a catalyst for the various acts of creativity. We are in agreement with this view because, for any act of creativity to manifest, it will come to the mind where it is imagined and reasoned upon before further production. Heidegger makes this position clearer when he stated, that the imagination is free in its perception of aspects. It is in this sense of self-endowment with images that the imagination is referred to as a formative faculty. To this end, it is not only receptive to images, it is also productive **(Unah, 1997:54)**. According to Heidegger the receptivity of

the imagination is identified by Kant with sensibility and productivity with the understanding. He maintains that as a result of this productive power of the imagination, and as a free faculty, it compares, shapes, differentiates and synthesizes. All these functions enumerated reveal the power of transcendence. Transcendence as the name implies is the propensity of man to metaphysicize. It is the power of the mind to project beyond the immediate or given state of affairs. Going further he stated:

> *Because of its freedom, the imagination for Kant is a faculty of comparing, shaping, differentiating and of comparing in general (Synthesizes) "imagining" therefore, denotes all non-perceptive representation in the broadest sense of the term: fancying, contriving, fabricating, worrying, day-dreaming and the like. The "power of imagination" ... is thus joined with the power of differentiation and the faculty of comparison in general (Heidegger, 1962:30).*

From this, we could see the potency of the power of the imagination. Because of its power to go beyond the given by projecting into the unknown, it is referred to as transcendental, properly called transcendental imagination. The beauty of this power is the ability to reorder, transform or amend existing structures to conform with modern reality. The age we are living now is the information age. Information flows from one part of the globe to the other is nowadays more effective and efficient. This is made possible through computers. Space technology is being consolidated through satellites. We expect results that will be of tremendous benefits to man and society. Architectural designs have been completely revolutionized. If you take a look at some structures in most cities in Nigeria such as Abuja, Lagos, Port Harcourt, Enugu you might think that you are in Europe. This is the work of creativity. An idea can arise spontaneously in the

mind often seeming out of nothing and at a time a person is thinking of something different. So the mind is always projecting into nothing for creative activities.

Ghiselms argued that, creativity is an inspiration when an individual is immersed in a subject well known to him. According to him, this has been found in men and women who are faced with the need sometimes the consuming, passionate desire to gain a new insight into truth or beauty, to solve a problem in science to bring to life a painting or to compose a poem or musical notes **(Ghiselms, 1952: 25)**. The metaphysical basis of creativity revolves on that projective instinct in man especially, when he is faced with some problems of existence. The projection into the unknown generates a complexity of possibilities, and this is the achievement of the ontological cognition. The Platonic world of Forms therefore, offers us possibilities to solve problems. All we need do is to set our minds at work for attaining these goals. In doing this, we should be open minded so as to allow our mind operate at full capacity.

6.1.2 CONDITIONS FOR CREATIVITY

It is a philosophical truism that every individual has some latent talents but we might discover that these talents may not manifest in the individual. For creativity to thrive, some maximum conditions are imperative. They are as follows:

i.   The capacity to be puzzled with the problems of existence. In life situations, we are confronted with certain realities which are perplexing. The French mathematician Poincare said, "scientific genius is the capacity to be surprised". Many scientific discoveries were made in this manner **(Ibid p. 48)**. We gave an example how Galileo

discovered the law of gravity by watching an apple fall from a tree. This view agrees with metaphysics as an ontological wonder. It probes into human perplexities and problems. Sometimes, solutions are found, sometimes solutions are difficult to come by but they keep the mind searching for solutions to social and political problems. This is the cardinal feature of metaphysics in the ontological synthesis.

ii.   Concentration: often times, we do things without concentration. This view was supported by **Mackellar (1957: 22).** For continuity in a trend of thought, a high level of concentration is imperative. This requires patience, perseverance, and great intellectual stamina. We might be busy but lack concentration. This is the tragedy of our environment. Sometimes we might be doing three things at a time without a maximum concentration **(Ibid p. 22).** Creativity thrives in an atmosphere of intellectual serenity conducive for learning. This is a challenge for our policy makers in various educational departments. The sustenance of lip service is a set back to the creative process in our environment. We can explore more and realize more when serious policies are put in place and seriously implemented.

a.   Ability to accept conflict and tension resulting from polarity rather than to avoid them. Conflict and tension must arise in human transactions. How do we resolve them?

iii.   The willingness to let go of all certainties and illusion. **Brunner (1974)** made it clear that creativity will thrive when we develop the spirit to let go without insisting on our own position.

Conditions three and four will be made clearer when we evaluate the phenomenological temper, which is an ontological framework for conflict resolution. The nature of conflict and its complexities brings to mind the problem of traditional metaphysical thinking.

Often times, we use such phrases in conflict situation that, this is the only way to solve a given problem. We do not agree with such mundane metaphysical thinking. The reason is that they depict fixism, dogmatism, authoritarianism which if not checked might result in war. This is where we should consider other options which could prove more viable and stabilize the system. This will enhance the perspective of truth. Creatively is dynamic and so requires a constant refashioning to meet human needs.

One factor to be borne in mind is that imagination which is the catalyst for productivity cannot exist in isolation. It is a product of speculation. For any work of art such as painting, scientific breakthrough or technology as you speculate, you imagine before creativity takes place. To this end, credit must be given to fundamental ontology which makes this productive work possible to enhance the structure of ontological cognition.

6.2.2 THEORY OF JUSTICE AND MERITOCRACY

The conflict between mediocrity and meritocracy has a long history. It was so intense in the environment where Plato wrote his treatises. The *Republic* therefore, is a bold effort to put merit in its proper perspective. How did he do this? He relied on the social stratification of society into three classes namely, the philosopher-kings, who are the rulers of the city, the auxiliaries or soldiers whose duty is to defend the city while the third class are the artisans or ordinary people whose responsibility is to provide the material resources for whole classes. He was of the view that, if each of the group is able to discharge its duties according to the principle of the division of labour, justice will reign and that harmony and concord will be manifested.

The emphasis on merit by Plato to guide our choice for leadership in all its ramifications has been frustrated, ignored or sometimes destroyed by extolling mediocrity. In some cases, you find the second group auxiliaries or soldiers who are charged with the defense of the city taking over the administration of the state. This in itself has been a cause of political instability. Nigeria has witnessed a lot of crises as the military abandoned their traditional role of defending the state to acquiring political power. This scenario affected our political and economic development for a long time. The situation became worse as the military culture has been imbibed by the average Nigerian.

The promotion of mediocrity in place of merit has a destructive tendency. This has been shown in appointments in various sectors of government. Merit has given way to quota system in an effort to represent federal character. The federal character was the outcome of the Constitutional Drafting Committee instituted in 1975 – 76 by the Muritala/Obasanjo led military government. The concept of federal character as a political tool emerged in Nigeria as a viable search for a stable democratic order. The objective of the federal character principle was articulated by Afigbo thus:

> ... distinctive desire of the peoples of Nigeria to promote national unity, foster national loyalty and give every citizen of Nigeria a sense of belonging to the nation notwithstanding the diversities of ethnic origin, culture, language, or religion which may exist and which it is their desire to nourish, harness to the enrichment of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (Afigbo 1989;4).

From here it follows that the federal character principle was aimed at creating a sense of belonging and participation by the diverse ethnic nationalities that make up Nigeria. This principle was an outcome of the anxieties and fears of domination that characterized ethno-regional relation in Nigeria. The fear of domination of one ethnic nationality against the other was the main reason behind the introduction of federalism. The question now is, whether Nigeria is a truly federal government in the true sense of the word. If it is a true federal structure as the 1999 constitution stipulated, then, the federal character principle with its twin surrogate of quota system would have been unnecessary, Section 14(3) of the 1999 Constitution stipulates the fundamental premise of the federal character principle as follows:

The composition of the federal government or any of its agencies and the conduct of its affairs shall be carried out in such a manner as to recognize the federal character of Nigeria and the need to promote national unity and to command national loyalty. Accordingly, the predominance in that government or its agencies of persons from a few states or from a few ethnic or other sectional groups shall be avoided.

Theoretically, the principle of federal character claimed to empower citizens for effective mobilization in the distribution of the national wealth for peace and progress. It was also aimed at promoting even development, as one ethnic nationality was not allowed to dominate the political process. The federal character principle is not limited to the national level. It is also expected to apply to the states and local governments. Appointments and the sharing of the national wealth should reflect a wider spread of such

states and local governments. The notion of the federal character principle is not a new phenomenon. According to Agbodike, the federal character principle dates back to the pre-independence days of nationalist agitation for participation in the administration of colonial Nigeria. Originally, during its informal application, the federal character principle was mainly concerned with legislative representation and equalization of inter-regional opportunities in education and appointments at the federal level **(Agbodike,1998:182).** To ensure the smooth application and operation of the federal character principle, create a sense of belonging and hope in all Nigerians and strengthen the nation as a united and stable entity, the 1995 Draft Constitution went further to establish a federal character commission. Agbodike maintains that this commission among other things, is empowered to work out systematically an equitable formula for the distribution of all positions, to monitor, promote and enforce compliance with the principles of proportional representation of positions at all levels of government, and to take measures to prosecute heads of any government ministry, body or agency who fails to comply with the formula **(Ibid).**

The ideals of the federal character principle manifesting in quota system being prosecuted by the federal character commission is quite commendable but events and experience have shown that its operationalisation tended more to discriminate rather than its intended purpose of national integration. In its theoretical framework, the principle was the product of the contradiction between the ethno-moral debate and a politico-moral balance. This contradiction is reflected in the imprecision of its definition by its proponents. According to **Afigbo(1989:4)**

*The acceptance of the principle by most members of the Constitution
Drafting lay partly in its novelty, partly in its cosmetic character, partly
in its rhetorical appeal, but above all, in its vaguenes*

In the opinion of this research, the adoption of the Constitutional Drafting Committee of the Federal Character Commission was to make sleeping dogs remain so momentarily. This is because the proponents showed revulsion of the disintegrating tendencies; the solution proffered in the name of federal character principle is a fecund source of ambiguity and a strategic retreat from the fundamental problems of unity and national integration. More importantly, the fear of domination has been heightened with the endless requests for state creation. Some of these states do not have the resources to embark on development programmes but depend on federal allocation for their operation. These states also promote ethnic sentiments and discriminate against non-indigenes in various sectors of government. This is against the spirit of the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, which stipulates that no Nigerian should be discriminated against on the grounds of state of origin, sex, religion or ethnic group. The fundamental paradox of the federal character principle is in its failure of achieving unity and national integration. Instead of balancing the various ethnic groups, it has succeeded in dividing them. It is in this connection that **Osaghae, (1989:453)** warns about the dangers inherent in consolidating statism in the guise of the federal character principle which, according to him, threatens the appropriateness of the formula as well as the unity and stability of the federal system in Nigeria. This position is supported by **Agbodike (1998:182)** when he posited that the federal character principle while stressing the imperative of ethnic-balancing invariably enthrones ethnicity and de-emphasizes the nation. In the process, too, it strengthens the parochial, particularistic orientations and primordial ethnic

attachments of Nigerians. These tendencies form the basis of disaffection among various groups in the nation. In addition, the formula has not adequately addressed the problem of the minorities especially in states made up of different and unequal ethnic groups. From the foregoing, the federal character principle and quota system run counter to merit which is the basis of productivity and creativity. On the surface, this principle satisfies the quest for representation and proportionality in allocating resources and in making appointments among the ethnic groups. There is however, a serious setback in the application of the formula. Choices are often made on the basis of criterion instead of merit. For example, the quota system as applied in education leads to lowering of standards against national interest. In the army, it leads to the production of sub-grade soldiers and officers. In the civil and public services of the federation, standards and professionalism are endangered and compromised. By eschewing meritocracy without recourse to standards, the quota system becomes morally reprehensible and an act of injustice (Bodunrin, 1989: 307). Viewed from this dimension, the quota system as embedded in the federal character principle, is not only counterproductive but negates the peaceful and orderly transactions of progressive development. The undue application of the principle leads to frustration and negates the encouragement of specialization in various sectors of the economy.

The shortcomings of the federal character principle and the application of the quota system were given a critical crackdown by Unah (1995, 2002[b]) when he stated that in Nigeria, the federal character principle and the quota system have become the major sources of worry and inducement to official corruption. Although the principle came into

force in order to unite the various ethnic nationalities but the application introduced obvious deficiencies and difficulties. It has implanted a culture of mediocrity in all strata of society thereby introducing a monumental blemish in the Nigeria federalism. This blemish in the federal structure has been rocking the political edifice contrived on the architectonics of pious and, sometimes, "naïve materialistic pedestrianism" **(Ibid p.71).**

Unah also observed that one of the embarrassing consequences of the federal character principle and the quota system is the pathological clamour for the creation of more states, more local governments and more institutions of higher learning when these institutions are not viable. These demands are anchored on the need to encourage even development and foster social justice. In practice and from experience, the principle of federal character and quota system run counter to social justice and even development. The principle has succeeded in distorting genuine aspirations of the productive segment of the society. The principle has sacrificed skilled labour on the altar of mediocrity. It has also made meaningless the concept of even development. Even development does not amount to uniformity. It is the opinion of this research that the different nationalities should aspire to their developmental needs without forcing or waiting on others to do so at the same time. The goals and aspirations of the different nationalities that make up Nigeria are different and their actualizations or mechanisms for their attainment should also differ.

The immediate consequence of the principle of federal character and quota system is the demand for rotational presidency and resource control. The point is being made that

what is important is the capability, credibility and the resourcefulness of the president irrespective of where he comes from. The president is a Nigerian and he owes loyalty to Nigerians not his state of origin or political party. This is the position of Unah (2002) citing **Ayoade (1998)** to the effect that diversity is both normal and necessary in a federation. Federal character became an issue because Nigeria has failed to practice true federalism. Over time, regional imbalance has been nurtured and exaggerated to a point that centralization has become the order of the day. Unity has become synonymous with uniformity and a central octopus is the normal consequence. The point of emphasis is that merit if it is adhered to will promote productivity; encourage hard work which will in turn encourage reward and good incentive packages. This will in turn promote social justice for all.

6.3   EDUCATION AND LEADERSHIP CULTURE

One of the contributions of Plato's moral philosophy is to develop a rounded personality through effective education. Education for him is a tool of fashioning a qualitative leadership which is necessary for the execution of the policies and programmes of societies. Most societies are where they are today because of their emphasis on qualitative education which is crucial for leadership skills. The point that is being made here is that education and leadership are structurally interconnected. The task this research is committed to articulate is to provide enough ground to show that qualitative education is necessary for good leadership. What then is qualitative education? What is the relationship between education and leadership? These questions as simple as they seem, provide profound insights on the necessity and relevance of education in our socio-

political environment. Azenabor, (2005) defines education from two perspectives, broad, narrow or technical. In the broad sense it implies any act or experience that has a formative effect on the mind, character or physical ability of the individual. It is from here that he sees education as a continuous process. A continuous process in the sense that we learn everyday of our lives through experience. He conceives education again as a process of development by which human beings adapt to their environment. It is a socialization and learning process. It is in this regard that he quotes Shipmen thus, "education is that part of socialization process that is specifically organized to ensure that learning occurs" **(Shipmen, 1971: 34)** Azenabor still tells us that **Durkheim (1986)** defines education in its broad dimension as the influence, exercised by the adult generation on those that are yet ready for social life. The main objective of education in his view is to arouse and develop in the individual certain number of physical, intellectual and moral states, which are demanded of him or her by society as a whole and the specific milieu, i.e. environment or social surrounding, for which he or she is specifically destined. For Azenabor, the conception of education as expressed by Emile Durkheim is anchored on his notion of man. Man according to him is a biological animal or creature and a member of society. Since he must live within the framework of society, it is necessary that he learns the social way of life. It is on this position that Durkheim grounds education as a necessary tool for the development of society.

In the narrow and technical sense, education is conceived as the process by which any society, through schools, colleges, universities and other institutions deliberately, transmits its cultural heritage i.e. ... its accumulated knowledge, values, skills from one

generation to another (**Azenabor, 2005 citing Kneller, 1964: 20)**. It is from here that Azenabor sees education as an attempt to make one a cultural member of society by developing his or her intellectual capacities. From this position, **Peters, (1980)**, sees education as the systematic training and instruction geared towards the development of ability, character, physical and mental powers of the individual through the careful dissemination of knowledge. In another development, education is seen as a process through which the life of man is not only conveyed to each successive generation but becomes established, modified or even drastically altered in the course of that process **(Brameld, 1971:5)**. This definition is extended to include a continuous reconstruction of experience and the adjustment of the individual to the society, to nature, to his fellow human beings and to the ultimate. This definition is linked to the one offered by **Dewey (1916)** which sees education as an activity, a shaping, forming and moulding activity, a shaping into the standard form of social activity. It follows from here that education is a moral physical, mental, societal, cultural, intellectual and spiritual adjustment of an individual **(Azenabor, 2005:5)**. As a result of its power of transformation, education is a force and a catalyst for national development. It is as a result of this that an educational system a country puts in place is vital towards the actualization of those goals. The National Policy on Education (2004) articulated these goals as follows:

a)   Education is an instrument for national development; to this end, the formulation of ideas, their integration for national development, and the interaction of persons and ideas are all aspects of education.

b)   Education fosters the worth and development of the individual, for each individual's sake, and for the general development of the society.

c) Every Nigerian child shall have a right to equal educational opportunities irrespective of any real or imagined disabilities each according to his or her ability.

d) There is need for functional education for the promotion of a progressive, united Nigeria, to this end, school programmes need to be relevant, practical and comprehensive; while interest and ability should determine individual's direction in education (National Policy on Education, 2004:2)

As a follow up from here, Nigeria's philosophy of education therefore is based on:

i. The development of the individual into a sound and effective citizen.

ii. The full integration of the individual into the community; and

iii. The provision of equal access to educational opportunities for all citizens of the country at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels both inside and outside the formal school system (Ibid).

The policy went further to advocate that for the philosophy to be in harmony with Nigeria's national goals, education has to be geared towards self-realization, better human relationship, individual and national efficiency, effective citizenship. National consciousness, national unity, as well as towards social, cultural, economic, political, scientific and technological progress. Philosophy of education also embraces national educational goals thus:

a) the inculcation of national consciousness and national unity;

b)   The inculcation of the type of values and attitudes for the survival of the individual and the Nigerian society.

c)   The training of the mind in the understanding of the world around; and

d)   The acquisition of appropriate skills and the development of mental, physical and social abilities and competencies as equipment for the individual to live in and contribute to the development of the society (Ibid, pp2-3).

From the above analysis, the philosophy, goals and national policy of education show a high level of optimism at least in principle but in practical terms, these goals and objectives are far from realization. The greatest obstacle lies in the politicization of education. One begins to wonder whether the mind is not receptive of these noble ideals which the philosophy of education has fostered. A school of thought has attributed this non-receptivity to the nature of man. This is because man is a complex being who is always battling with nature. It becomes imperative at this stage to raise some questions on whether man is competent to receive education in form of instruction on shared moral values. Who is an educated man? Is it a man who has gone through a formal or informal school, or is it one who has acquired some skills in a given area of specialization? In responding to this question, Azenabor (2005) citing **Akinpelu, (1981: 179)** posits that an educated man is discovered by the temper of his mind, by his attitude towards life, and his fair way of thinking. He sees things clearly, he can discriminate among them, he can combine ideas and see where they lead: he has insight and comprehension, the mind is a practiced instrument of appreciation. A more philosophical outlook on who an educated man is, according to Azenabor was articulated by **Peters (1966: 30 – 31)** as follows:

i. The possession of somebody of knowledge and some kind of conceptual scheme and understanding of associated principles;

ii. The transformation of one's outlook by what one knows – so the knowledge acquired affects the way one looks at things. If it does not, then one is only "knowledgeable" not "educated". A man who is educated must change his ways of behaviour towards his fellow men. He must also change his perception about people and show understanding when the need arises. A man who is educated is considerate and mannerful;

iii. The care about standard in one's chosen field – there is commitment and fidelity to standard.

iv. Cognitive perspective: the educated man must have knowledge of whatever he does. He must relate his field to other spheres of life;

v. Invariably, an educated man should imbibe certain knowledge or information which is understood and there is a change in terms of what one does or does not do.

Various theories have been advanced in order to put fairly theoretical framework on knowing who an educated man is. The oldest of these theories is idealism. As it relates to education and development, idealism emphasizes the spiritual dimension to education. It is of the view that education tries to bring out what is already in the individual. This theory is a product of traditional ontology which presents education as an imposition. It assumes that man is static, willing to accept whatever that is taught. An appropriate

educational policy that can have positive and pragmatic outlook in the opinion of this research is the one that is flexible, that can recognize the needs of society and above all, one that will take into consideration man's essential nature. For Kant, human nature is split between free rationality and animal instinctuality, with rationality taking a pride of place, as our most deep and distinctive sense of identity and interest. Kant stipulates that regardless of the base inclination of our animal natures, we are to adhere to the dictates of reason itself. We must above all, remain true to our most profound identity as rational agents (**cf .Orend, 2000: 16**).

Reason as Kant conceives it, is intrinsically normative of our speculations, of our understanding, and of our will. Its central function is to provide us with orientation and direction in our lives. Kant maintains that reason provides us with ends proper to our deepest nature as rational beings and it also provides us with an ordered and coherent set of directives to employ as means to those ends. To this end, reason serves as (i) to enhance its own internal coherence and unity and (ii) to promote its own realization in the external world. Kant's position here is that reason is a unified totality which is fundamental to human progress. This human progress is anchored on morality. Morality here apart from human conduct also depicts self-concept. The self-concept or identity is a composite of thoughts and feelings which constitute a person's awareness of his individual existence; his conception of who and what he is. This identity formation is a life long development largely unconscious to the individual and his society. This identity development and maintenance occupies each human life as long as that life lasts.

The self in identity is heavily affected by the reflected appraisals of the society in which one lives. If this reflected appraisal of the self is mainly derogatory, then the affected person's attitude towards himself will be derogatory. If the self is looked down by other people or other races or ethnic groups, this further and massively conditions interpersonal relations and self-perception of the individual. I have taken pains through deep reflection to examine the self-concept because of the situation we find our self today. Our schools have failed us. These schools through curricula that are not given a philosophical foundation produce functional illiterates, early dropouts, unwed mothers, delinquents and many at times armed robbers. All these represent a familiar patterned sequence in the lives of our youths. This is also a reflection of the larger society.

It appears to show that these experiences tend to reinforce and reflect low self-esteem among the youths. Some of these youths seek escapism in foreign cultural outlook projecting deformed personalities. When this happens, deeper frustration sets in and they in turn beget atavistic tendencies. This atavism or aggression when turned inside surfaces as armed robbery and sometimes terrorism, which is a threat to peace and stability. How then do we correct this failure imposed on us through our education? What do we do to fashion out good and qualitative leadership? How do we relate qualitative leadership to education?

According to (Onyewu, 1980:3) the first is to know how to identify a good leader in ones socio-political environment. If we identify this, then we ask: who are we? He answered the question in this way, "We are Africans with a communal social system and inbuilt

self-discipline. A communal social system is one that presupposes that the good of the individual is the good of all. In traditional African society, people respected age. No young man was known to disobey his elder. No elder was known to deceive the young. Furthermore, family name was maintained as it was a sacred object. Family discipline was the weapon with which this name was maintained. There was peace and stability in our family life and system." Onyewu further maintained that the "African communal system was one that did not require a policeman, because it was self-protecting. There was no scrambling for wealth or property, because you were your brother's keeper. No one was hungry because food was communally owned and shared. There were no land disputes because the land belonged to the family, clan or community. You farmed a portion allocated to you and after harvest; the land reverted back to the clan, the community or the family" **(Ibid).**

The point to be made from here is that property and police are signs therefore not of man's civilization as we are meant to believe, but of his corruption and inordinate ambition. In Africa property has become the consequence of an institutionalized individualism. It is man's reception of cultural import from Europe. This action is better described as man's fall in African environment. The second solution is to know who our enemies are. It is not enough to know who you are but to survive, you must recognize your enemy and avoid him. Who and what are our enemies? The greatest enemy of Africa and our environment can be classified as "cultural imports" from abroad that are incompatible with our environment **(Ibid p. 4)**. The enthronement of individualism which elevates the self against the collective interest of others is responsible for corruption

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among our political class. The competition among leaders on what they have acquired, is responsible for the winner takes it all in our political landscape. Leaders lack the moral integrity expected to mobilize their followers. The proliferation of organs charged with fighting corruption such as the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission and the Independent Corrupt Practices Commission is an indication that the police can no longer cope with these duties. The leaders who are charged with the enforcement of public morality are also involved in corrupt practices. What then should be the role of qualitative leadership? Who is a dedicated and committed leader? In our environment, leadership has become a burden because of lack of integrity, hypocrisy and praise-singers. Leaders have become puppets, surrogates without a sense of vision and commitment. Some of those who come up do so for lack of what to do. And when they finally occupy leadership positions, they lack ideas expected in a changing and difficult environment. A leader is someone who plays the role of a guide for others, the directing head of a team, or someone who has the ability and capacity to mobilize others for the attainment of common objectives. So the term "leader" is the attribute of a person who catalyzes (sets in motion), directs and controls the activities of a group for a purpose **(Unah, 2004: 3).** The role of a leader is very crucial in order to actualize a set target of a unit of production. Various theories have been presented and analyzed in a section of this work, so, it is not expedient for consideration here. However, those essential qualities of leadership will be enumerated to show the necessity of qualitative leadership through effective education.

Olukoju (2002) contends that leadership implies the existence of "followership" and in itself connotes leading others, presumably by example or taking the followers in a particular direction. He made a distinction between a leader and a ruler. A ruler is somebody with power ... who exercises power because a thief in your house can exercise that power for a few minutes. A leader, on the other hand, leads by expressing the common aspirations of the people and leading them in a particular direction. Consequently, a leader can influence a group or a society because he is an epitome of new movement, new ideas and has enormous appeal and transformatory impact on his society. He possesses certain qualities which vary depending on the circumstances he finds himself.

It is in this connection that **Oluleye, (1985)** outlines the qualities of a leader which includes decision making, courage, will power, magnetism, management (of men and women), knowledge, moderate living, fitness, tact and diplomacy and honesty, such qualities expected of a leader must reflect in the way he conducts the affairs of the society. From this position leadership should be people oriented so as to give a sense of belonging and confidence for his policies to succeed. Unfortunately, many leaders lack these qualities that are mentioned here. Some are imposed leaders who are interested in pursuing their own selfish interests. Such leaders make themselves unpopular and do not command the confidence and the respect they deserve. Most leaders now seem to be preoccupied with the persecution and prosecution of their perceived enemies or the opposition. Such an action amounts to chasing shadows without bringing to bear the main essence of statecraft. Most of them do not care about their reputation or even to maintain

their family name. Without qualitative leadership, the quest for a solid basis for domestic and international peace and security will not be realized. A leader is expected to reconstruct a system which will reduce the harsh realities which our environment has imposed on us. Leadership to this extent has been essential and vital because it puts man's creative energy into productive use. Our era is getting more complex and more complicated that we require men of vision, men of wisdom, men of innovation. These qualities I argue are not to be acquired by one that is not educated. It is not enough for one to be educated before approaching the murky waters of leadership, but such a leader should take the advantage provided by education to be able to lead effectively.

Often times, we see that some leaders resort to the use of force in achieving unpopular polices. This force that is used may not have recourse to the rule of law. The point that is being made here is that it is not enough to use force, but is better to follow the law as the constitution stipulates. **Markings (1987)** one of the greatest advocates of disarmament, speaking of the united nations Charter commitment to abandon the use of force, puts it this way, "unless this professed objective can be achieved within an early future, the policies misnamed "defense" may bring the final consummation of the use of force, the end of man". The necessity of bringing an end to the use of force has become crucial in view of its global application by leaders. It is absolutely essential to construct a collective security system which will not only protect us from that terminal disaster, but will also provide the context in which abuse, arms control and disarmament can be accepted and implemented by governments. This requirement has become vital in view of the callousness of some leaders who have no respect for human dignity. Such leaders

are myopic, suffering from muddled thinking which manifests in the destruction of human life. When suggestions are offered to reduce tension which such activities create one is accused of being naïve, of lacking in realism or even of lacking in patriotism. This is the situation we find ourselves today. This is where it is recommended of a leadership that is persistent, imaginative in overcoming the obstacles of radical political and social development. Societies face the risk of disintegration because of the inability of leaders to be creative and imaginative. This apparent lack of vision and deep philosophical reflection manifest in formulating polices which do not promote the common good". The common good in this context refers to the happiness which statecraft aims to achieve.

The question that is being raised is, how practical is it to go on risking, at enormous expense, the end of human society? Is the world economy to be crippled forever by the burden of a futile and destructive arms race? How practical is it for the most powerful countries to refuse to discuss with each other, a cooperative relationship in regional conflicts such as the Middle East, which are most likely to trigger the ultimate disaster? How can we be sure that nuclear weapons will never be used? How long will the rest of the world be content to live in nuclear jeopardy? These are the challenges facing modern leaders of this generation. It is not only in the quest for peace and security that positive leadership is required. The technological evolution, the increasing wave of world population, the steady and increasing interdependence of states, confront man with an ever lengthening list of global problems, problems which no state, however powerful, can manage alone. The quality, the equity and stability of future life on this crowded planet depend on enlightened leadership now in a wide variety of fields of human activity. The

machinery and capacity of managing these problems enumerated are still lacking. The reason for this is that perception and orientation on ground are reflections of traditional metaphysical posture, a tradition that is grounded on Eurocentric humanism, which relegates the others to nothing. A humanism that lacks tolerance and accommodation, a humanism which elevates itself above others and regards as nothing anything that does not conform to its conceptual scheme. This is a negation of positive leadership. A leadership that goes about destroying other nationalities in order to promote and consolidate its own civilization is ultimately a negation of positive leadership. This humanism is not likely to promote socio-political stability. As a result of this kind of cross-road we have found ourselves, we need a new and dedicated leadership which can inspire and motivate the bewildered and problems-beset- governments of the world to unite their strength once again in great common causes.

It is on this ground that **Markings (1987)** states that a leader through out his life should engage in an exacting regime of spiritual speculation, self-criticism and analysis which linked his personal life to his public performance. 'Politics and diplomacy', he wrote, are no play of will and skill where results are independent of the character of those engaging in the game. Results are determined not by superficial ability, but by the consistency of the actors in their efforts and the validity of their ideals. Contrary to what seems to be popular belief, there is no intellectual activity which more ruthlessly tests the solidity of a man than politics. Apparently, easy successes with the public are possible with a juggler, but lasting results are achieved only by the patient builder **(Ibid p.11).**

This position was elaborated by **Unah (2002[b])** when he posited that "political stability is achieved not as a result of the execution of some extra mundane political blueprints but by actual doing of political deeds. Authentic statecraft or legitimate political conduct does not seek to redeem men from their historical condition as such, it rather embarks on some prudent management of the opportunities afforded by the present moment in such a way that future opportunities for human achievements of all sorts can arise". Unah went further to argue that "the right of command in the province of politics is not divinely invested, not by reason of any radical autonomy but by total immersion in or involvement with political inventiveness or creativity. One leads and others follow, not because the former is appointed by God or that he is radically autonomous but because he is a political genius, a virtuoso who has made an accurate appraisal of the human condition and resolutely decides to recast, by the doing of deeds, the collective destiny of his people" (2002:44).

Unah's position is made more lucid in the sense that a man leads not because God appointed him or because he has extraordinary vision but by reason of his political virtuosity. His anchor for legitimacy is not that he selfishly exploits the weakness and cowardice of his people but that he creates adequate opportunities for human projects of all sorts. "It follows from here that a people are not bound by the leadership of an effective and incompetent ruler. It follows too that a government that exploits rather than create opportunities, a government that impoverishes through mismanagement rather than provide infrastructural facilities that make life more meaningful is not worthy of the name. Such leaders ought to be voted out". A humane leader is one who through

learning and insight, power of analysis and intellectual discipline tackles the practical problems that confront society. Before acting, we ought to have gone to the root of a problem and establish principles on which our actions could be based. With this one gets the confidence which are impressive and inspiring. This is a philosophical approach of turning intellectual gift to the solution of practical problems. A leadership imbued with the spirit of philosophy sets a pace for the beginning of an organic process through which the diversity of peoples and their governments are struggling to find common ground on which they can live together in one world of global humanism. Such humanism must have shed weight of traditional metaphysical temper. With this a framework will be put in place for the development of human society. Working at the edge of the development of human society through an enhanced leadership insight is to work on the brink of the unknown. This is a clear manifestation of transcendence.

The power of finite transcendence puts man's creative evolution into productive dimension. If there is failure in the actualization of a given task, it is to the effect that man's metaphysical insight could be approached traditionally. This does not mean that a leader must be a superman living in a chilling cloud of the lush mindedness and idealism. A leader must be more metaphysical, more human and very practical in tackling the problems of his environment. A profound leader must provide the exhilarating spectacle of principle and intellect in action. His strength, confidence and sureness of touch have far reaching impact in communicating ideas and solutions to problems. He should be extraordinarily sensitive to the fears and difficulties of the people he is presiding over their affairs. He could grasp the fundamentals of complex situations with light and create

a series of acceptable options for the people involved in them. As our world is getting tension soaked everyday, in our crowded world, strife torn world, we need a new philosophy of leadership that would be a rallying point to the central authority, a leadership of pragmatist test, a leadership which can balance national interests with those of the global community, a leadership which can agree on what needs to be managed and what cannot be left to chance, regardless of political or ideological differences. We need a leadership which is not cynical or defeatist or parochial about the future, which is determined to exploit the positive promise of our inventiveness instead of succumbing to its destructive dimension. Such a leadership is expected to put well-tried principle into practice in dealing with local and international conflicts and disputes. We need a leadership which believes in the rule of law and pursues it. We need a leadership which can bring about the best and most creative in humanity rather than strengthening or evoking the worst. We need a leadership which can dispel popular apathy and inspire that practical idealism and enthusiasm without which no great historical objective can be attained.

The point to be noted here is that these qualities that have been enumerated are not difficult to attain. There is an increasing awareness globally of moderate, pragmatic, sensible, realistic governments in the world. At no time in human history, has it been possible to communicate hopes and ideas to virtually every member of the human race. However, in political realm we appear to be slow to apply new techniques of communication to our basic problems. Ultimately, the quality of leadership will dictate the method of galvanizing support for actions and results. This is where followership is

connected to leadership. A people gets the type of leader they deserve because actions of leaders that are not checked by the followership is an indication of passivity on the part of the people. A great leader lives on through his ideas, giving strength and inspiration to those who come after him.

The analysis of leadership in this research presents a global picture of leadership. The point is made that a people get a leader they deserve. In this connection, leadership is culture driven. Highly civilized cultures who have reached a strong threshold of moral integrity care about their name, their family names and even their profession. In Nigeria, the picture is different. What is important is that X is a leader, what he has to offer does not matter. What his credentials are also make no difference. The situation is made worse by the emphasis that the minimum qualification is a secondary school certificate. In a world of complex and complicated problems ravaging the human community, an intellectual and potent capacity are crucial for the evolution of a positive leadership. The cry of mismanagement and rotational presidency is an indication that the quality of leadership is not only poor but portends difficulty in achieving political stability. As a result of the diverse nature of Nigeria, it is imperative to enthrone a culture of leadership that is forward looking devoid of a gang up as it is presently constituted. This is a sure way of putting into practice a pattern of thinking that is presently in decay. There is a deterioration in thinking and that is why we need ready-made solutions to our various problems no matter how complicated they are **(Ogundowole, 2007:18).** This is why Ogundowole recommended Self-Reliancism as a philosophy rooted in originality, innovation and a profound way of generating ideas to solve human problems. His vision

of Self-Reliancism has an ontological basis because it stresses the need for the inexhaustibility of the human mind. The goal of ontology is to emphasize that there are many ways of approaching a given problem brought before man. To say the least possibilities are more than actualities. This goal however, may not be realized if our educational system fails to produce genuine leaders. The problem of corrupt leadership is traceable to indiscipline which does not recognize pubic opinion. There is also a communication gap between the leadership and follower ship. As **Onyewu (1980)** and **Oluwole (2007)** stated:

> *An authentic educational system in Africa will promote all that is ennobling and creative in the Nigerian psyche. Then, too, such an education will affirm the promise of a moral way of life creating the Nigerian environment at home, at school and at work. The effort that is being made today through our educational institutions, is to raise and equip leaders for tomorrow. It is expected that such leaders when produced will be superior to what we have today. This is because the knowledge of the self, an ontological telescope which gives us our true identity has been inculcated. With this ontological propensity, a communion will be perpetuated with our ancestral spirits through our Africanness. When this is done, there is the firm belief that the dead, the living and the unborn will unite to rebuild the destroyed shrines of Africa. This charge, this vision is a great responsibility which will aim at rediscovery of leadership personality in Africa and Nigeria in particular (p.23).*

When this is done, there is the firm belief that the dead, the living and the unborn will unite to rebuild the destroyed shrines of Africa. This charge, this vision is a great responsibility according to the authors which will aim at rediscovery of leadership personality in Africa and Nigeria in particular.

6.4 DEMOCRACY, DIALOGUE AND POLITICAL STABILITY

Democracy, dialogue and political stability constitute the foundation of an ordered social system. Many societies the world over are plagued by authoritarianism or despotism without due regard to a democratic culture. To add insult to injury, dialogue has been a missing link in our political environment. This accounts for the proliferation of political and social instability. What then is democracy? Democracy is man's effort to enthrone a metaphysical principle to organize a chaotic universe. This definition is a departure from conventional conception of democracy. The universe under which activities of all sorts thrive has been battling with many contending forces that it requires a definite sense of direction by man. From inception, man has invented systems for the effective organization of the universe. Such metaphysical systems include autocracy, theocracy, fascism and democracy. Democracy is a sustained evolution from the short-comings of the other systems of government mentioned.

The point to be made here is that all these systems are metaphysically guided. Democracy then is a majority rule. In this case, a decision or a policy is said to be democratic when the majority takes such a decision or policy. Traditionally, the word democracy is of Greek origin. It consists of two words – 'demos' which means the people and 'kratein' which signifies rule. As a whole it implies the rule of the people. The implication can further be clarified by comparing it with other words of the same type. Thus, aristocracy means rule by the nobility, plutocracy by the rich; bureaucracy by the officials; and theocracy by the priests **(Banerjee, 1968: 174).** Since its inception in ancient Greece, democracy has undergone a series of transformation. For example,

Herodotus a famous historian conceived it as the rule of the multitudes or a society in which there was equality of right and the holders of political office were accountable for what they did. Two key concepts are derivable from this definition, Democracy implies the rule of the multitude and those in leadership position are held accountable for their actions. It is also implied that major political decision is always in favour of the majority. It is in this regard that Pericles regarded the Athenian constitution a democracy because it is administered for the good of all citizens rather than for the benefit of the few (Ibid). Since democracy is people oriented, Abraham Lincoln gave a succinct definition thus, "government of the people, by the people and for the people" **(Ibid p.175)**. Lincoln's definition of democracy though a grassroot definition anchors this system on the people who exercise their mandate through participation. This definition also empowers the people to vote out an unpopular candidate. This can only take place where democracy has taken root to foster the aspirations of the citizens.

Bryce (1975) defined democracy in a more concrete language in this form:

> *I use the word in its old and strict sense, as denoting a government in which the will of the majority of qualified citizens rule, taking the qualified citizens to constitute at least three fourths, so that the physical forces of the citizens coincide (broadly speaking) with their voting power(p.65).*

Bryce seems to have placed emphasis on qualified citizens as those to express their mandate in a democratic dispensation. Who are those qualified? What is the criteria for such qualification? This distinction is not properly articulated. In recent times, democracy has been given deeper and wider significance. **Lindsay (1987)** stated that democracy is not a makeshift or a compromise or a means of keeping people quiet by the

production of a sham unanimity or a process of counting heads to save the trouble of breaking them, but by the ideal form of government. To many others, democracy is not merely a form of government but a way of life. This is the direction in which Owolabi(1999) citing **Merriam (1988)** saw democracy. According to him democracy is not a set of formulas or a blue-print of organization but a cast of thought and a mode of action directed towards the common weal as interpreted by the common will. Merriam's definition of democracy grounded it on a metaphysical framework. It is a grand design by the human mind to fashion out a device to regulate society. This grounds democracy on the intellect in order to respond to man's projective disposition.

Gandhi identified democracy as grounded in truth and non-violence defining it as the art and science of mobilizing the entire physical, economic and spiritual resources of all the various sections of the people in the service of all **(Gandhi, 1947: 204).** Gandhi's notion of democracy brings out again the concept of majority in benefiting from democratic decision. Mobilizing all sections of the society requires cooperation, thus, the success of democracy depends on the support given to it by the populace. The definitions we have given so far show that the concept is riddled with difficulties. **Owolabi (1999)** anchored this controversy on conceptualization. He quoted **Olaitan (1992: 424)** as follows:

> *But it is a matter of regret that, whereas an almost inexhaustible literature exists on the concept (democracy), there is glaring absence of consensus by scholars on the appropriate delineation of the nature and contours of the term. Such that it is rather difficult to argue for a specific conceptualization of the term as the proper meaning, since democracy is now generally seen as a term with many meanings.*

Adducing reasons for this apparent controversy in conceptualizing democracy, Owolabi stated among other things that (1) democracy has become in current usage, another word for political decency and civilization. As an idea, democracy has become a honorific title, the concept has passed into the catalogue of universal virtues. Democracy has also become a moral concept, with a regime-laying claim to it just for the sake of survival, without any commitment to its ideals. The consequence of this is that it becomes very difficult for an agreement to be reached because of the diverse political regimes and systems that lay claim to democracy without being genuinely democratic **(Owolabi, 1999: 4).**

The second reason he mentioned is the ideological character of democracy. The ideological struggle between rival political divides has given rise to a situation where each of the parties lay claim to be democratic not because of its participatory tendency but mainly because of ideological persuasion. Throwing more light on this problem, **Gitonga (1988)** states thus:

> *There is no doubt however, that the substance or content of what is described as democratic is a function of the ideological bent of the term. As the ideological bents or political families are many and diverse, so too are the meanings attached to the term (p.6).*

Owolabi went further to argue that the meaning attached to democracy by a scholar is coloured by his ideological orientation. For example, a scholar of a liberal inclination is likely to define democracy to encompass institutions and principles that are in line with his ideological position. On the other hand, a scholar who is not in conformity with the liberal tradition will attempt to define it excluding all those principles with which a

liberal person would define it. This makes the conceptualization of democracy a difficult task. So far, effort has been made at a conceptualization of democracy as if that is all there is. One needs to go beyond conceptual problems and investigate the core issues in democracy. How does it operate generally? Do the principles differ across societies, regions or cultures? Is it an equivalent of globalization? What does Nigeria as a society stand to gain from democracy as an institution? These questions which have gained currency in our time need radical answers in order to justify democracy as a political and social institution. In Nigeria, argument has arisen on the need to domesticate democracy. The notion of domestication will appear as if democracy is alien to Africa. The way we operate this system suggests that it is alien to Africa. The reason for this is that those who manage the affairs of the state exhibit anti-democratic posture. They do not respect the rule of law which is a basic foundation of democracy. This is where this research argues that democracy is culture driven. Where anti-democratic forces are foisted on the people through election rigging, cheating and other electoral malpractices the result is a general apathy. This has been responsible for the withdrawal of the intellectual elites from the political process. This has in turn empowered those who are not fit for statecraft. The question that we should ask is whether we are democratizing in the true sense of the word? This question was raised in a categorical manner by **Ake (1996)** thus, Is Africa democratizing? Ake's worry which is also a concern to many people is that the contemporary world is not a favourable environment for democracy. According to him, we have always preferred the reputation of being democrats to the notorious inconveniences of practicing democracy. While democracy is spreading globally, the world is becoming repressive through the violation of human rights. The situation is

worse in Africa where democracy is used as a means to capture political power but its essence which is anchored on the people is highly trivialized and negated. Ake captured this situation when he stated that Nigeria democratizes with no separation of powers, all powers having been invested in an imperial presidency. There is hardly any rule of law, no plausible system of justice, and no transparency. The coercive institutions of the state are above the law, civil society is below it, ordinary people are out of sight, far beyond its protection. The judiciary is dissociated from justice, and the bureaucracy is oppressive and arbitrary (Ake, 1996: 6).

For him, the Nigerian state like the colonial state before it, turns on the calculus of strength. The problem now is that of choosing democratically those who will control a state apparatus which is inherently undemocratic. This paradox which manifests in the installation of leaders who do not respect the expression of the mandate of the people is a set back to the democratic institution. Politics is about the control of state power. Ake maintains that much of what is negative about politics in Africa arises from the character of the state, particularly its lack of autonomy, the immensity of its power, its proneness to abuse and the lack of immunity against it. The character of the state rules out a politics of moderation and mandates a politics of lawlessness and extremism. It is for this reason that the nature of the state makes the capture of state power irresistibly attractive. Winners of political power win everything, the losers lose everything. Nothing can be worse than losing, nothing better than winning. Thus, everyone seeks power by all means, legal or otherwise and those who control state power hold on to it by all means (Ibid p.7). What is demonstrated here is not political legitimacy or legality as recent judicial victory has shown but only a matter of expediency. For this research, what is

sown is the seed of intolerance and political instability. From this position it follows that democracy means something theoretical and something in practice. The ideals which anchor on participation and accountability are fundamental to public morality. The concept of accountability and transparency are rooted in a phenomenological culture. Phenomenology cultures man to imbibe the orientation of allowing something to present itself transparently the way it is. What we have seen of democracy is that it is impracticable. As a metaphysical device instituted by the human mind, its inherent difficulties stare us in the face. No matter how its lofty ideals are fantasized, democracy remains an illusion in the context of attaining complete communal stability.

The realization of a genuine phenomenological actualization of a democratic culture rests on dialogue as an instrument of political stability. Conflicts and crisis are fundamental to human nature. A phenomenological understanding of democracy therefore, expects us to listen patiently to others and hear their own position. Dialogue is all about consensus and consent. Reaching a compromise involves free discussion. By a free discussion, all facets of an issue are exposed, analyzed with a view to distilling the essential elements in the matter. The problem which democracy has faced over the years is the inability to listen to the voice of the minority which is part of the political process. It is on this ground that **Mill (1947)** sees the majority as a destruction of the minority. He reasoned that the suppression of the majority by the minority amounts to the destruction of individuality. It follows from here too, that democracy destroys individuality. It prevents men of exceptional merit from rising to great height by regulating their deeds and utterances. Since the majority rush to take a position on the issue thereby fore-closing other points of view, democracy through this dogmatic fashion disallows superior opinion

no matter how creative it may be. This in turn produces incompetent and inefficient leaders especially in the Nigerian environment. To restore this individuality, competence in leadership and creativity, a phenomenological dissection of democracy is imperative. To this end, consensus through compromise, consent, consultation and the sovereignty of the people should dominate the practice of democracy. A phenomenological temperament is all democracy needs for its actualization in our contemporary society. The contradictions and paradoxes which we are experiencing are parts and parcel of democracy. This is why a call for its domestication in Nigeria appears to be an exercise in futility. A genuine democrat who is oriented in phenomenological culture realizes that there are many ways to truth and that in every question, there are many competing answers. What is expected is to explore all possible answers to a question. By this human imperfections in thought and actions, man's understanding and a prescription to a problem should admit limitations. There is also a painful admission that one's own aims and actions are also imperfect. This ontological insight demands humility and scepticism without which compromise is impossible. This is the novelty of phenomenological ontology in the application of dialogue to achieve socio-political stability.

Relating this position to the present Nigerian democratic set-up, one becomes cynical whether the country is on the way to the attainment of socio-political stability. A school of thought has also argued that democracy is alien to developing societies such as Nigeria. To this end scholars have suggested that democracy be domesticated to suit Nigerian political environment. This research sees nothing wrong with democracy as a viable system of government. The problem is the way and manner democracy is practiced. The system allows corruption, cheating , fraud and other electoral offences to

the extent that the winner takes all and the loser loses all. This situation gives rise to tension, conflict and instability. Representation is lopsided. It is on this ground that the author recommends proportional representation. Representative democracy will ensure that various interests be integrated for national spread. Representation will also ensure that consultation is made on sensitive policies instead of the current practice on party patronage. Representative democracy promotes the management of pluralism especially a multi-cultural and a multi-religious country like Nigeria. This is where there is a parallelism between phenomenological ontology and postmodernism

Reconciliation of Phenomenological Ontology with Postmodernism

Philosophy in the eighteenth century witnessed a radical revolution with the emergence of existentialism, positivism and postmodernism. These movements criticized traditional philosophy for a continuous promotion of the regime of the absolute. With reference to postmodernism emphasis shifted to the demolition of the absolute as a way of having access to truth and reality. In this connection Smyth (1991:12) considered postmodernism to be ontological in the sense that it has abandoned the modernist assumption of a fixed and an unchanging reality. Similarly, Solomon and Higgins (1996:300) contend that there is no all-embracing, "totalizing" viewpoint, no "God's-eye view," no pure "objectivity". Unah (2002c :128) maintains that postmodernism is averse to all totalizing pretensions, to orthodoxy, to authoritarian accounts and regimes of truth, to excessive conceptualizations of reality that lock us up in rationality. On how postmodernism becomes a version of phenomenological ontology Unah says:

> Consequently, postmodernism is a call to self-discovery, to multi-vocation: and an invitation to witness the contingency, fragility, indeterminacy and immanence of human ways of knowing and experiencing ,and a heeding of the call of Husserl

to return to "the things themselves" –to pre-reflective consciousness, to naïve experience, to the lifeworld, in order to organize experience anew with a view to understanding the politics of creating meaning (I bid).

Postmodernism therefore emphasizes the perspectival of·truth without relying on absolutism. This however, does not amount to relativism as effort is geared towards tolerance, accommodation through intersubjectivity. Intersubjectivity applies to the polling of opinions to arrive at a middle course. This is better expressed through the Satrean notion of the "universalibility" principle which demands actions and policies to reflect a human face without which instability will continue to dominate our political and social landscape.

Postmodernism in an effort to reduce metaphysical abstractions and pretensions has attracted various criticisms ranging from intellectual arrogance to autocracy. In order to streamline its focus from phenomenological ontology the later does not advocate a rejection of the status quo but a reconstruction in order to make reality holistic. Phenomenological ontology is the determination of the metaphysical capacity of man which facilitates all forms of human activities. In this connection one will be correct to say that phenomenological ontology proceeds from human finite essence by expanding the scope of the objectivity factor thereby exposing the nature of reality. With this foundation the humanistic essence is guaranteed.

The humanistic essence which is anchored on fundamental ontology stipulates the analysis of various forms of man's transcendental structures which hold the key to socio-political stability.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

SUMMARY

RESULTS AND FINDINGS OF THE RESEARCH.

Two things are of interest to us here; the results and the findings of the research.

1. Social and political stability are necessary for any meaningful development. As a result of the crisis and conflicts in Plato's socio-political environment, his major target was to arrest chaos and political instability which will in turn promote peace and harmony. The finding of this research is that Plato's theory of justice did not adequately address chaos and the arrest of social and political instability which are fundamental to development.

2. Plato lost faith in the crisis of his environment occasioned by the extinction of mental excellence .As one who gave primacy to thought and creativity through the intellect, he recognized the metaphysical necessity of going beyond the physical world to transcendental reality. This is the basis of the world of Forms/Ideas. The world of Forms constitute the realm of real reality characterized by permanence and perfection. The physical world is the realm of particulars where there is constant flux and instability. This research also observed that Plato's notion of the world of Forms popularly known as Plato's Utopia does not provide sufficient ground for physical reality on which human activities thrive.

3. Plato's theory of justice which is grounded on his theory of forms was aimed at mitigating the unending problems of mediocrity in place of mental excellence. To this end, specialization of labour or what he referred to as departmental excellence became

imperative to actualize man's innate abilities. Specialisation provided a channel of putting man's mental excellence into productivity. He used this theory to stress the need for man to master his unit of operation for effective and efficient production. This brought about the social stratification of society into three classes of artisans, the producers of material wealth, the soldiers who will guard the city and the philosopher-kings to rule. The effective discharge of these duties by each class that make up the society, is a necessary condition for harmony, peace and stability. Any infringement by any of the parties is injustice and will give room to instability. Plato relied so much on the supremacy of human reason. The supremacy of reason is a traditional epistemological problem in rationalism, a dominant philosophical school of thought. Plato's theory of justice therefore reflected the majesty of reason (thought) in human affairs. It is the position of this thesis that reason alone does not solve the entirety of human problems, emotion sometimes man's vital decisions.

4. Plato's theory of justice provides a foundation for political and social stability. Incidentally, it did not examine critically the dynamics of human nature. Man is an eccentric being who is always in search of ways to ameliorate his existential condition. This thesis highlighted the need to take into cognizance the complexity of human nature especially when vital policies are being considered. This is one of the flaws of Plato's theory of justice.

5. This research found out that the inability to do a critical examination of human nature in Plato's theory of justice provided the faulty ontological foundation of the theory. To

this end, there is the need for the ontological justification of the theory of justice as presented by Plato to lay a solid foundation for social-political stability. An ontological basis for Plato's of justice is a critical analysis of the various dimensions of the concept of justice.

6. The relevance of the phenomenological ontology of Plato's theory of justice, is to show the temporal character of justice. This temporal character shows the fluidity of the concept of justice. If it is well understood, it will provide a solid foundation for tolerance, accommodation and peaceful co-existence. The finding of this research is that ontology discloses the metaphysical veil of traditional mode of thought in order to make such amendable to other view points

CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE

This Thesis has contributed the following to knowledge:

1. Human reality does not come in a neat packaged whole rather, it is segmented. Ontology therefore makes it possible for the human mind to look at the various dimensions of an issue with a view to presenting their feasibilities and limitations.

2. Theories that are propounded in every branch of human knowledge are reflections of the period in question. Such theories are therefore subject to revision, modification or elaboration in line with current trends.

3. Ontology is the basis of development in the sense that it provides the skill and conscious effort for the human mind to proffer solutions to problems not matter how complicated they are.

4. An Ontological researcher is a negotiator of peace. He does this by examining all sides of a given issue whether they make us happy or sad. With this a level play ground is created for the proliferation of opinions and ideas.

5. Social insecurity is one of the ontological structures of man and a phenomenological ontology offers a concrete approach to the analysis of this ontological structure of man.

6. The ontological basis of Plato's theory of justice is the position that justice should not be seen as an object, neither should be fixed as x or y but should manifest itself phenomenologically the way it is in itself from itself. It is on this ground that the ontological basis of Plato's theory of justice can lay a solid foundation for socio-political stability.

CONCLUSION

The philosophies propounded by men reflect their orientations. This position is demonstrated to a large extent by Plato's philosophical postulations. He was brought up under an environment of social and political tension which consolidated instability and disorder. His major concern centred on how to arrest political and social instability. In his effort to arrest this instability, he came up with his dualism. This dualism differentiated appearance from reality. This means that at the level of appearance, reality is unstable characterized by opinion, illusion and deception (Ozumba, 2001). This deceptive nature of reality involves generation and degeneration as the Heraclitean philosophy ably amplifies. Heraclitus' thesis is that reality is in a constant state of flux. No human condition is permanent. The second level of reality according to Plato is the world of Forms or ideas. This world is where reality exists independently, perfect and

immutable. It is the permanent state of reality. It does not accept alteration. This is the foundation of Plato's metaphysics. Metaphysics for Plato anchors reality on the idea, all non-idea things are unreal and subject to decay. Plato's concept of the Forms is anchored on the philosophy of Parmenides. For Parmenides, "being", "the One", the "it is", is and non-being is an illusion **(Omoregbe, 1991, Unah 1996, 2002a, 2006).** The thesis of Parmenides domiciled reality on the one, being, absolute and sees alteration which is non-being as non-existent thus, an illusion. This absolute metaphysics is rigid, dogmatic and forecloses the multiplicity of interpretation of reality.

Plato's 'world of Forms which is the basis of his metaphysics construed a theory of justice anchored on traditional ontology. Plato's theory of justice as a philosophical issue is as a result of his reaction against the sophist. The sophist had conceived justice from the point of view of class domination. Before the emergence of the sophist, the metaphysical introduction of justice into philosophical discourse was championed by Anaximander a pre-Socratic philosopher. The history of philosophy demonstrates that the pr-Socratics were preoccupied with the basic stuff of reality such as water, air, fire, earth, atom, etc, etc. Anaximander was the first to observe that the basic stuff of reality could not be any of those elements that we are familiar with. According to him the opposing forces between the various elements amounted to injustice. The stabilization of these elements in order to achieve order is justice. Anaximander saw justice as a force desired to achieve order **(Ophir,1991).** For Parmenides the forerunner of one dimensional reality, justice is seen as a divine power, an agent of punishment and revenge which holds the interchangeable keys to the great folding doors in the gates of the path of night and day.

Similarly, Heraclitus compares justice to a city wall and advised people to fight for the law as if they are fighting to protect the wall (Ibid p.46).Some members of the sophists conceived justice as paying ones debt, keeping a promise or the interest of the strong. Aristotle conceives justice as what is fair and equal. Plato's theory of justice states that everyman posseses a departmental excellence for which he is best suited. This means that specialization or division of labour should follow man's inclination towards departmental excellence. The implication of this is one man, one job. With his concept of departmental excellence, he segmented society into the producers, auxiliaries and philosopher-kings. Each of these segments of society must confine itself to its stipulated duties to ensure harmony, peace and stability. The contrary is injustice. This is what Plato understood by theory of justice. With this theory he was convinced that socio-political stability would be guaranteed. In principle, this ideal is noble but it fails to take cognizance of the dynamic dimension of human nature.

This gap provides the basis for ontological grounding of Plato's theory of justice in order to achieve a sustainable philosophical foundation for socio-political stability. Plato's theory of justice is rooted in traditional ontology which makes reality inflexible, inelastic and intolerant which paves the way for instability. An ontological basis therefore establishes a phenomenological ontological dimension to the concept of justice. This research demonstrated explicitly that ontology is possible only as phenomenology **(Heidegger, 1962).** While ontology studies the being of entities, phenomenology makes it possible for being to manifest itself clearly for inspection. The phenomenon (that which appears) is rendered accessible to the mind. The implication of the

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phenomenological ontology of Plato's theory of justice is that, justice is not seen as a fixed attribute or entity but presented in its transparent form. Justice becomes an exercise in man's transcendental exercise. Transcendental exercise implies man's ability to make projections from one state of affairs to another. Plato's presentation of the theory of justice described justice from only one dimension of man's transcendental structure thereby excluding all other aspects. Phenomenological ontology shows that man's power of projection is inexhaustible **(Unah, 2006, Ogundowole 2007).** Ontology in phenomenological analysis recognizes that possibilities are more than actualities in man's social and political space. For socio-political stability to be achieved in various spheres of man's transactions, the metaphysical powers of man (productive imaginations) should go beyond the given to actualize man's multifaceted approach to reality.

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