

EPISTEMOLOGY: AN OVERVIEW OF THE MENTAL OPERATIONS OF THE HUMAN INTELLECT IN THE ACQUISITION OF KNOWLEDGE

Onyeakazi Jude Chukwuma PhD

Philosophy Unit, Directorate of General Studies

Federal University of Technology Owerri

jude.Onyeakazi@futo.edu.ng; judefuto@gmail.com

08129937821, 08033694748

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Abstract

Mental operations are indeed operations that touch on mental contents. Thus, the human mind is seen as a cluster of functions that spring from the interaction between man and his social environment. By that we mean that it possesses a set of faculties that aid the acquisition and processing of knowledge. This paper is therefore about to cast a look at the cognitive activity of the human intellect in the acquisition of knowledge. The novelty of its approach consists in looking at the approach taken by the human intellect as it acquires knowledge in a broader philosophical context. The main thesis of the study is to x-ray the processes that will be undergone in order to ascertain a belief to be true knowledge. From the standpoint of scholastics and other competencies, having an indebt understanding of such epistemic procedures is not only important but timely.

Introduction

The tradition of philosophy is one that has held knowledge as its utmost priority. Little wonder Daniel A. Kaufman maintained that the mainline tradition in philosophy has held knowledge as its highest aim and has shown little interest in wisdom.¹ But however, the nature of knowledge and its relation to certainty, belief and doubt has been a philosophical topic ever since the beginning of philosophy. From time immemorial, man has been puzzled with the reality and authenticity of what he believes. The question of "how can we justify our belief? How plausible is that which we believe? What is truth? have preoccupied man and his philosophy. The ancient philosophers established a number of truths about knowledge that (1) knowledge can only be of what is true (2) A belief in only knowledge if it can appeal to some kind of warrant (3) one who claims knowledge must have a resolute commitment to the position

¹ Daniel A. Kaufman, *Knowledge, Wisdom, and the Philosophers*, Philosophy, The Journal of the Royal Institute of Philosophy, Vol. 81, no. 315, January 2006, 141.

claimed to be known.² This implies that if one claims to know something, then it excludes the possibility of being at some later time rightly converted to a different view. However, despite these enigmas about knowledge, man has figured out certain ways in which that which is belief can serve as true knowledge. This however implies that there are certain processes that will be undergone in order to ascertain a belief to be true knowledge.

Meanwhile, in the history of philosophy, the acquisition of knowledge has been notably left to the domain of both the intellective faculty and sensitive faculty. These two faculties of knowing have been considered the as the bedrock or foundation of human knowledge whereby the knowledge gotten from the latter is interpreted by the former. However, for the purpose of our study, this work will focus mainly on intellectual knowledge as a cognitive activity of the intellect in the acquisition of intellectual knowledge.

Definitions Of Terms

What is cognitive activity?

The word cognition comes from the Latin verb *cognosco* (*con* 'with' and *gnōscō* 'know') (itself a cognate of the Greek verb γι(γ)νώσκω *gi(g)nōsko*, meaning 'I know, perceive' (noun: γνῶσις *gnōsis* 'knowledge')) meaning 'to conceptualize' or 'to recognize'.³ From this etymological background, Cognition connotes the mental action or process of acquiring knowledge and understanding through thought, experience, and the senses. It encompasses processes such as knowledge, attention, memory and working memory, judgment and evaluation, reasoning and computation, problem solving and decision making, comprehension and production of language, etc.

During the seventeenth century, the major cognitive faculties--sense, imagination, memory, and understanding or intellect--became the central focus of argument in metaphysics and epistemology to an extent not seen before. The theory of the intellect, long an important auxiliary to metaphysics, became the focus of metaphysical dispute, especially over the scope and powers of the intellect and the existence of a 'pure' intellect. Rationalist metaphysicians such as Descartes, Spinoza, and Malebranche claimed that intellectual knowledge, gained independently of the senses, provides the framework for constructing a

² Anthony Kenny, *Knowledge, Belief, and Faith*, Philosophy, The Journal of the Royal Institute of Philosophy, Vol. 82, no. 321, July 2007, 381.

³ Stefano Franchi, Francesco Bianchini. "On The Historical Dynamics of Cognitive Science: A View from The Periphery". *The Search for a Theory of Cognition: Early Mechanisms and New Ideas*. Rodopi, 2011. p. XIV.

new theory of nature. Other writers, including Hobbes denied the existence of a distinct intellectual faculty, and so challenged the metaphysicians' abilities directly to perceive the essences of substances. ⁴

Thus, agreeing with Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas admits that knowledge is obtained through two stages of operation, **sensitive** and **intellective**, which are intimately related to one another. The proper object of the sensitive faculty is the particular thing, the individual; the proper object of the intellect is the universal, the idea, the intelligible. But the intellect does not attain any idea unless the material for that idea is presented to it by the senses. This however implies that the knowledge gotten by the senses is further interpreted by the intellect through the process of thinking. And thinking comprises a threefold act: conceptualization, judging, and reasoning. These three acts can be described as the three phases of intellectual knowledge and as such are the processes by which man acquires intellectual knowledge.

What is intellectual knowledge?

In defining intellectual knowledge, Ramon Lucas opined that this type of knowledge is not confined within the limits of the sensitivity of the various organs, rather it presents contents that prescind from time and space, contents conceived as spiritual entities independent of matter.⁵ Intellectual knowledge essentially goes beyond the individual limits of the thing and grasps it in its universal dimension. The existence of intellectual knowledge is further attested to by the innate capacity of man to judge and reason. With the power of intellection, man is able to formulate general laws of nature with the use of both deductive and inductive propositions.⁶ This is the type of knowledge that is specifically attributed to humans and aids thinking. The phases of this type of knowledge would enable us understand it better.

Phases Of Intellectual Knowledge

Conceptualization

⁴ Gary Hatfield, *The Cambridge History of Seventeenth Century Philosophy*, Daniel Garber and Michael Ayers eds. Cambridge University Press, 1998, 953.

⁵⁵ Lucas, Ramon, *Man Incarnate Spirit: A Philosophy of Man Compendium*, Trans, Nikola Derpich and Stephen Arndt, Torino: Circle press, 2005, 30.

⁶ Ekwuru, G., *Basic Introductory Theme and Issues in Philosophical Anthropology*, Enugu: Victojo Production, 2010, 87.

Conceptualization is a word that has its root word as concept. The word concept from its dialectology comes from the Latin word *conceptus-a-um*, the past participle of the verb *concupere* which means understanding. Hence meaning to grasp or to apprehend. The concept of grasping and apprehending is that which is proper from the intuition of man. The first operation of the mind is to grasp, and apprehend concepts. In consideration to this mode of acquiring concepts, very many schools of thought are quite in opposition to this medium.

Giving a look on the word conceptualization, Ramon Lucas holds that “conceptualization means generation. It is the act of understanding the essence of a thing and internally producing the new being of an immaterial and universal nature which is called “concept”⁷ Implicitly, one can say that conceptualization is a process whereby the intellect grab or apprehends a concept or a particular object through the senses. Here the intellect understands at an instant what a concept, event or an object is. Succinctly put, the act of conceptualization happens like a flash. It gives a speedy though organised recognition of a concept. However, conceptualization originates from wonder, from a questioning with regard to the data of sensitive knowledge, though it goes beyond these data. It can be said that conceptualization is the fruit of the act of conceptualization. It arises from the data. It is an organisation of this data and contains the essential notes, prescinding from all individual particulars.⁸

Furthermore, the concept is interior and is expressed externally by means of the word. The word verbal or written, fixes the concept and make it communicable to others. Words and concept, however are different and independent.⁹ In order to express these concepts, the role of language is indispensable.

The concept is the first fruit of the act of conceptualization which arises from data¹⁰. This data in question is one that is gotten from the sensitive knowledge. Although the materials gotten are from the data of sensitive knowledge considering its organization, also it goes beyond it. This act does not act in a hurry but when it is finally accomplished, its results are flashy and instantaneous in nature. This in a way explains why we sometimes spend much time trying to understand a subject matter but when we least expect the solution to it, it just comes and goes.

⁷Ramon Lucas, *Man Incarnate Spirit, A Philosophy of Man Compendium*, Trans. By Nikola Derpich, Lc, and Stephen Arndt, Circle Press, 2005, 141.

⁸Ramon Lucas, *Man Incarnate Spirit*, p. 142.

⁹Ramon Lucas, *Man Incarnate Spirit*, p. 143.

¹⁰ Ramon Lucas, *Man Incarnate Spirit*, p. 142.

The concept which is gotten is something that is universal and abstract in nature which can either be expressed by words or not. Expressing it by word would make it readily transmittable or transmissible, while there are concepts that we find very difficult to communicate; thoughts, and those other equivocal concepts. Important to note is that conceptualization concerns itself with the question of “what is this?” through the medium of concepts.

Judgment

Judgement in the first place, entails in logic the mental act of making or understanding a positive or negative proposition about something. It could also mean an opinion formed or reached at from the observation of two things. Paul Glenn sees judgement as “the pronouncement by the mind of the agreement or disagreement of two ideas. It is the enunciation whereby one idea (predicate) is asserted as applying or not applying to another idea (subject).”¹¹ Equally Judgement is the singular act by which the intellect affirms or denies either a proposition or a thing. It has to do with the ability to deny or to affirm. Judgement is the mental activity which is signified in a moral proposition.

Ramon Lucas stating St. Thomas’ definition affirms that Judgement is the act by which the intellect affirms or denies something. It can be defined with St. Thomas, as “an act of the intellect by which it joins or divides (concepts) by affirmation or denial.”¹²

Judgement has both a material and a formal element. Glenn highlighting the two tells us that “the material element of a judgement is constituted by two ideas and their comparison by the attentive mind. The formal element of a judgment (that which makes a judgement the thing that it is) is the enunciation, the pronouncement, the prediction, whereby one idea is affirmed or denied of the other.”¹³

The exploit of judging is quite in discrepancy with that of conceptualization in the sense that judgement deals with the act of affirming or denying while conceptualization is concerned only with the acquisition of that which is to be affirmed or denied. This in turn makes us to come to an understanding that judgement would presuppose conceptualization.

Ideas are in a way not thoughts because they are gotten through the apprehension of the essences within the process of conceptualization.

¹¹ Glenn J. Paul, *Criteriology*, New York: Vail-Ballou Press, 1953, p. 223.

¹² Ramon Lucas, *Man Incarnate Spirit, a philosophy of man compendium*, 143.

¹³ Glenn J. Paul, *Criteriology*, p. 223.

Judgement in this case would be considered a thought process owing to the fact that it tries to state in essence whether a thing is true or false. This can only be done through properly expressing what has been affirmed or denied. To this Glenn avers: "The judgement finds outward expression in the *proposition*."¹⁴

Subscribing to the aforementioned fact, Lucas expresses that "with judgement, a synthesis between the subject and the predicate takes place."¹⁵ The idea of a subject and predicate presuppose a proposition as already pointed out. This not only deals with the relationship but their area of divergence and convergence. Through the sole medium of assertion which of importance, the certainty of a thing or proposition is given. Once conceptualization has taken place, one passes to a judgement to affirm or deny what has been conceptualized. Judgement answers the question, "It is so?" by means of assertion.¹⁶

Reasoning

Reason is the capacity for consciously making sense of things, establishing and verifying facts, applying logic, and changing or justifying practices, institutions, and beliefs based on new or existing information.¹⁷ Also according to Glenn, reasoning is the process by which the mind, unable to pronounce upon the agreement or disagreement of two ideas, resolves the difficulty and reaches pronouncement by bring in a third idea which it knows in relation to the first two.¹⁸ It is closely associated with such characteristically human activities as philosophy, science, language, mathematics, and art and is normally considered to be a distinguishing ability possessed by humans. Reason, or an aspect of it, is sometimes referred to as rationality. Reasoning, like habit or intuition, is one of the ways by which thinking comes from one idea to a related idea. For example, reasoning is the means by which rational individuals understand sensory information from their environments, or conceptualize abstract dichotomies such as cause and effect, truth and falsehood, or ideas regarding notions of good or bad. Reasoning, as a part of executive decision making, is also closely identified with the ability to self-consciously change, in

¹⁴ Glenn J. Paul, *Criteriology*, p. 224.

¹⁵ Lucas Ramon, *Man Incarnate Spirit*, p. 143.

¹⁶ Romon Lucas, *Man Incarnate Spirit, a philosophy of man compendium*, 144.

¹⁷ International Journal of Philosophical Studies. Volume 8, 271.

¹⁸ Glenn J. Paul, *Criteriology*, p. 228.

terms of goals, beliefs, attitudes, traditions, and institutions, and therefore with the capacity for freedom and self-determination.¹⁹

Reasoning according to Ramon Lucas is an activity peculiar to the human intellect since it is found neither in the animals or in the angels nor even in God. It does not exist in animals because it presupposes judgment, and it is not found in the angelic or divine intellects because reasoning consists in passing from something previously known to something else known successively.²⁰ In the discursive process, therefore, there is temporality, which is impossible for the angelic intellect, since the angels sees from the beginning all that is knowable in the ambit of what they naturally know, and this can be said all the more of divine knowledge.²¹

That reasoning is an activity proper and characteristic of man is explained by the imperfection of human knowledge with respect to angelic and divine knowledge and its perfection relative to purely sensitive knowledge of the animals. Man on the one hand is incapable of knowing all truths at once. On the other hand, he understands the essence of things and the relations that exist between objects. The capacity that man possesses to perceive all of this in the data provided by the sensitive knowledge is what permits him to formulate universal judgements., These judgements, related to other judgements allow him to arrive at new knowledge which could not be acquired either by immediate intuition or by experience alone. This process of relating various judgements is precisely what is called "reasoning."²²

Reasoning is a physical activity of the cognitive order, whose end is to formulate a judgment, not in virtue of the immediate evidence of the relation that exists between the subject and predicate, but rather by reason of a necessary connection, which the human intellects grabs, between the truths presupposed by the judgements given and the new judgement that it is going to formulate. The connection consists in the fact that once the truth of the former is affirmed, the later must necessarily be true. One could say, then, that reasoning is the derivation of a new judgement from other previously

¹⁹Michel Foucault, What is Enlightenment? in *The Essential Foucault*, eds. Paul Rabinow and Nikolas Rose, New York: The New Press, 2003, 43-44.

²⁰Ramon Lucas, *Man Incarnate Spirit, a philosophy of man compendium*, 145.

²¹Ramon Lucas, *Man Incarnate Spirit, a philosophy of man compendium*, 145.

²²Ramon Lucas, *Man Incarnate Spirit, a philosophy of man compendium*, 145.

formulated judgements, by means of the dependence, grasped by the intellect, that the new judgement has with respect to the previous judgement.²³

The Problem Of Universal

In the history of philosophy, the problem of universals has been an enigma to the human mind. There has been this controversy centred on the nature of universals, whether they have concrete existence or are the conception of the human mind. Notably, this has been an ancient problem about what is signified by common nouns and adjectives, such as "man", "tree", "white", etc. What is the logical and existential status of the "thing" that these words refer to? Is it in fact a thing, or a concept? Is it something existing in reality, external to the mind, or not? If so, then is it something physical or something abstract? Is it separate from material objects, or a part of them in some way? How can one thing in general be many things in particular?

Meanwhile, the concept universals have been considered as a property of an object, which can exist in more than one place at the same time (e.g. the quality of "redness"). Precisely, there have been questions raised in relation to the nature of universals such as: Is there anything like love itself? What is justice? What is peace? What is beauty? These questions are asked on the basis that there is a difference between love and or instance of loving act, between justice and instance of just act, between whiteness and a particular white object, between humanity and individual man. The confusion has always been that individual man come into being and pass away but humanity always exist, white objects can be made black but whiteness exist, beautiful objects changes while beauty itself remains, so what is the ontological concept of the universals? Do they really exist and if they do, where and how do they exist?

However, it is pertinent to note that the ontological concept of the problem of universals was first raised by Boethius in his commentary on the work of Porphyry, the disciple of Plotinus. The work in question was *Isagoge*.²⁴ In this work, Boethius was asking whether universals were realities outside the mind or simply ideas in the mind and nothing more. Are they real entities which could be found anywhere apart from the individual objects that manifest them?²⁵ Nevertheless, in order to proffer solutions to this problem, some philosophers over the years have come out with a view that best serve their

²³Ramon Lucas, *Man Incarnate Spirit, a philosophy of man compendium*, 145.

²⁴ Joseph Omoregbe, *Metaphysics without Tears, A Systematic and Historical Study*, Joja Educational Research and Publishers Limited, 1996, 12.

²⁵ Joseph Omoregbe, *Metaphysics without Tears, A Systematic and Historical Study*, 12.

understanding of the universals. These views of most philosophers have been grouped into three different schools of thought namely: ultra-realism or exaggerated realism, moderate realism and nominalism.

Schools Of Thought On The Problem Of Universals

Ultra-realism

In this school of thought, the recurrent stand given to the problem of universal is that the universals are real entities existing somewhere apart from the real objects that manifest it. According to them, individual objects participate in the nature of the universals. Furthermore, it is pertinent to note that the earliest a fortiori explanation of the nature of the universal was given by Plato with his doctrine of participation.²⁶ He posited this theory as a solution to the problem of the one and many with questions such as, what is the first cause of all reality in whose existence and reality do all other being take part? What is it that is permanent and not changing, that could stand as the basis of all beings? How does the many relate to the one?²⁷ Certainly, in order to understand this doctrine of participation by Plato, a profound knowledge of the concept participation will be of paramount importance. The word participation is derived from the Latin verb *participare* meaning 'to take part' The term is also a combination of the Latin word '*pars* - parties' meaning 'part' or 'side' and the verb '*capio*' *capere, cepi, captum*' meaning "to take." So, the etymological derivative or literary meaning of participation is "to take part" as the above analysis and synthesis show.

Succinctly then, the term participation in the philosophical undertone is the theory, whereby finite beings according to their respective ontological perfections are said to share in the one ultimate and infinite being whose essence is existence.²⁸ This implies that all reality in whatever modality of existence or perfection is regarded as an expression or mirroring of the infinite being whose act it is to be in itself.

According to Plato in this doctrine of participation, every concrete or actual thing in some degree participates in the perfect model of the class of which it is a member, and in some measure in an imitation or copy of the form.²⁹ The form according to Plato is not a mental entity at all, but rather an idea or archetype

²⁶ Emmanuel M. Ome and William Amam, *Philosophy and Logic for Everybody*, Institute of Development Studies, University of Nigeria Enugu Campus, 2004, 96.

²⁷ Emmanuel M. Ome and William Amam, *Philosophy and Logic for Everybody*, 96.

²⁸ Emmanuel M. Ome and William Amam, *Philosophy and Logic for Everybody*, 97.

²⁹ Samuel Enoch Stumptf, *Philosophy, History and Probleams*, McGraw Hill Inc, 1971, 47.

or original model of which particular objects, properties and relations are copies. Here, what we see or what appears to us according to Plato are not real, but literally mimic the real Forms. Forms are capable of being instantiated by one or many different particulars, which are essentially material copies of the Forms - the particulars are said to "participate" in the Forms, and the Forms are said to "inhere" in the particulars. It can be said that Platonic Forms possess the highest and most fundamental kind of reality. They are perfect because they are unchanging. The world of Forms is separate from our own world (the world of substances) and is the true basis of reality. Removed from matter, Forms are the purest of all things. True knowledge or intelligence is the ability to grasp the world of Forms with one's mind.

From this Platonic Form, it can be asserted that the good is the supreme reality, whose being and perfection every other thing share in. Hence, Plato is of the view that what we have in the world are the copies or the imitation of the perfect copies or ideals in his world of ideas which he held to be eternal. Thus, beautiful things share in the idea beauty.

Another big figure in the discourse of the problem of universals in the ancient period is **Plotinus** who lived about 204 - 270 AD. As a disciple of Plato, he propounded the theory of emanation which is some worth different from that of Plato to explain the participation of object in the universal. This theory for him holds that the world process begins with the incomprehensible divine one which is the eternal source of all beings and emerge first as the universal reason when as the world soul and later as individual soul as well as individual bodies include matter.³⁰

Moderate Realism

The moderate realists assert that the universals actually exist but not as independent realities different from individuals or particular things. They are not separate from instances of objects or events. This implies that universals exist in individual objects and are extracted from them by the human mind. So, the universal exist in the mind but with a foundation in things from which they are extracted. Boethius, Albelad, and Thomas Aquinas were among those who offered this solution to the problem of universals. For Aquinas, participation simply put, is the act of receiving existence or becoming from the *Ipsum-esse-subsistens*, that is the being whose act it is to be in itself, the unparticipated source of all reality. Thus, for Aquinas, the ultimate foundation in which everything participate is the fullness of God who as existence actually contain

³⁰Frolor, I. *Dictionary of Phil osophy Moscow*, Progress Publishers, 1975, 37.

within himself all perfections in the highest degree according to possibilities.³¹ Furthermore, he is of the view that means not having something by nature but as received from above (from that which is of absolute value). Therefore, all other being are being by participation and so made by God.³² The God whose being is self-subsistence, the unparticipated source of Aquinas, the being whose act it is to be in itself, the pivot of existence; and the participants, the created beings.³³

John Stuart Mill discussing the problem of universals is of the view that the "formation of a concept does not consist in separating the attributes which are said to compose it from all other attributes of the same object and enabling us to conceive those attributes, disjoined from any others. We neither conceive them, nor think them, nor cognize them in any way, as a thing apart, but solely as forming, in combination with numerous other attributes, the idea of an individual object"

Nominalism

The nominalists assert that the universal are not entities or realities and as such they are nothing but names used in designating things that have or share certain similarities.³⁴ It can be said that nominalism is the doctrine that holds that abstract concepts, general terms or universals have no independent existence but exist only as names. Therefore, various objects labelled by the same term have nothing in common but their name. Put another way, only actual physical particulars are real, and universals exist only subsequent to particular things, being just verbal abstractions.

Nominalism arose in reaction to the problem of universals and in particular to Plato's solution to it, known as Platonic realism, which holds that abstract objects like universals and Forms exist in their own right and are wholly independent of the physical world, and that particular physical objects merely exemplify or instantiate the universal. Nominalists ask exactly where this universal realm might be, and find it unusual and unlikely that there could be a single thing that exists in multiple places simultaneously.

³¹Brugger W. *Philosophical Dictionary*, Washington D.C. Cronzaga University Press, 1984, 234.

³² Clark, M.T., *Aquinas Reader: Selection from the writings of Aquinas*. New York: Philosophical Library, 1972, 102.

³³ Emmanuel M. Ome and William Amam, *Philosophy and Logic for Everybody*, 100.

³⁴ Emmanuel M. Ome and William Amam, *Philosophy and Logic for Everybody*, 98.

The Medieval French Scholastic philosopher and theologian Roscellinus of Compiègne (c. 1050 - 1125), a teacher of Peter Abelard is often regarded as the founder of modern Nominalism. Also, William of Ockham is considered a pioneer of Nominalism, and he argued strongly that only individuals exist (rather than supra-individual universals, essences or forms), and that universals are the products of abstraction from individuals by the human mind and have no extra-mental existence. However, his view is perhaps more accurately described as Conceptualism rather than Nominalism, holding that universals are mental concepts (which do exist, even if only in the mind) rather than merely names (i.e. words rather than existing realities).

Elucidating the view of the nominalist, Steenberghen expressed in Emmanuel M. Ome, is of the view that we may claim that the concept of universal/being as being synthesizes the diversity in nature but he asserts that the concept is only a label, a word, a nomen (nominalism) or at least a mental representation without objective value, an artifice of the mind to unify phenomena (conceptualism).³⁵ This view has been regarded as an extreme position with monstrous implication. By denying the concept of being on a universal level, it has dealt a mortal blow on metaphysics, the science of being as being.

George Berkeley best known for his empiricism, was also an advocate of an extreme nominalism. Indeed, he disbelieved even in the possibility of a general thought as a psychological fact. It is impossible to imagine a man, the argument goes, unless one has in mind a very specific picture of one who is either tall or short, European, African or Asian, blue-eyed or brown-eyed, et cetera. When one thinks of a triangle, likewise, it is always obtuse, right-angled or acute. There is no mental image of a triangle in general. Then not only do general terms fail to correspond to extra-mental realities, they don't correspond to thoughts either.

Defects Of These Theories

Ultra- Realism: This theory cannot be true. For according to this doctrine, the universals must either exist apart from individual things, or it must constitute the essence of individual things. If it exists apart from individual things, then it is not the essence of these individual things, it is not in the things, and the mind which perceives it there is mistaken. Thus, is the objectivity of knowledge destroyed, and we lapse into scepticism. If on the other supposition, the

³⁵Steenberghen quoted in Emmanuel M. Ome and William Amam, *Philosophy and Logic for Everybody*, 99.

universal constitute the essence of each individual, then we have things that are at the same time individual and universal – an obvious contradiction – or we have the individuals of the same essence existing as mere accidents of a common knowledge, and again the validity of knowledge perishes, and scepticism casts its cloud of darkness and silence over all minds and all science.³⁶

Nominalism: This theory cannot be true. It contradicts itself. How can the mind classify things without a basis of classification? If as H. G. Well says, “all chairs are different,” how can we speak of all chairs? How do men come to make the same classifications? If men did not make the same classification, how would speech be possible? When the Nominalist says universal are groups; universal idea are group-names, they contradict themselves, for their word express their grasp of the meaning (the grasped essence) of universal and group and name and idea.³⁷

³⁶ Paul J. Glenn, *Criteriology, a class manual in Major logic*, Vail Ballou Press, Inc., Binghamton and New York, 1933, 222.

³⁷ Paul J. Glenn, *Criteriology, a class manual in Major logic*, Vail Ballou Press, Inc., Binghamton and New York, 1933, 220

Evaluation And Conclusion

There is no doubt that man as a knowing being has always tried to know things around him. The knowledge as most philosophers has asserted is known as empirical knowledge. But from the fore going, there is no doubt that empirical knowledge cannot give man the whole knowledge of reality. This is because, the senses have proved to be deceptive. In order to get the knowledge of reality, that which is gotten from senses is further interpreted by the intellect through the process of conceptualization, reason and judgement. However, it has to be noted that there are forms of knowledge that go beyond human reason, judgement and concepts. There is no doubt that there is knowledge that goes beyond the physical – but metaphysical, knowledge that goes beyond human reason and senses but only believed through faith. The knowledge of God and the angels, the knowledge of the soul and afterlife, the knowledge of death and spirit, have all proved to go beyond human reason, concepts and judgement. Knowledge of such metaphysical attributes are gotten often times through revelation. This however implies that revelation is another level of knowledge that may not be empirically or scientifically proved, but only believed through faith. In order to buttress this point, Pope John Paul II in his encyclical *Fides et Ratio*, has argued that there are three levels of knowledge: (1) Revealed knowledge (2) Scientific knowledge, and (3) empirical knowledge. According to him in the encyclical, revealed knowledge is the highest form of knowledge where human reason cannot reach. Reason for the Pope stops at the scientific level of knowing, and where reason stops, faith continues and it is this faith that helps us to believe those things that are not palpable to the senses. Although the Pope stresses the fact that reason gives us proof for our belief, but only reason cannot give us true knowledge of reality. A holistic knowledge of reality is gotten when faith is aided by reason.

On the other hand, the problem of universal has been the ontological status of universal. From the fore going, it is evident that many philosophers have proffered solution to this problem, ranging from the ultra-realist, moderate realist and nominalist. But among this, the problem of universals tends to have its proper solution in the concept of the moderate realist. This is said because according to Glenn, this doctrine has a positive argument for the truth of itself in the fact that it square perfectly with both theoretical logic and practical experience. This means that the nature of an object cannot exist without the object bearing it or neither can the object exist without bearing its nature. Succinctly put, the redness of a thing cannot exist in the air but in an object, that

bears the redness. That is to say, the moderate realist concept of the universals can be said to be the most accurate concept of the universal.³⁸