

## A concise explanation of the mediaeval philosophy

Dr. S. B. M. Marume<sup>1</sup>, R.R. Jubenkanda<sup>2</sup>, C.W. Namusi<sup>3</sup>, N. C. Madziyire<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>BA, Hons BA, MA, MAdmin, MSoc Sc, PhD

<sup>2</sup>BSc, MSc. Econ, MSc, DPhil (Candidate)

<sup>3</sup>BAdmin (Hons), MPA, DPhil (Candidate)

<sup>4</sup>BE, MEd, DPhil (Candidate)

---

**ABSTRACT:** The historical developments of systematic philosophy may be viewed as having passed through a number of phases depicted as (a) Greek classical periods; (b) mediaeval phase; (c) modern philosophy, and (d) contemporary systematic philosophy. Mediaeval philosophy, which essentially a christian philosophy reflects and is founded upon Christian philosophy explainable in religious terms and concepts. This forms the subject of this article.

**Keywords:** historical developments, mediaeval philosophy, Christian rules and principles, reflection, religious terms, concepts and practices.

---

### I. Introduction

Mediaeval systematic philosophy which is primarily a Christian philosophy is reflective of and is built up from Christian religious terms and concepts, constituting the subject of the article.

### II. Purpose of the article

The express purpose of this article is to: (a) define the mediaeval period and (b) give a concise explanation and characteristics of mediaeval philosophy as an important historical phase of systematic philosophy.

### III. A concise explanation of mediaeval philosophy

The fundamental questions which seek sound answers involve:

- What is the mediaeval period?
- What are the striking characteristics of mediaeval philosophy?
- Who are the articulate advocates of mediaeval philosophy?

**Possible answers, explanations and examples:**

#### 3.1 Mediaeval philosophy is a Christian philosophy

Mediaeval philosophy is a Christian philosophy. It reflects and is built up from Christian religious concepts. The views of the Greek philosophers are either interpreted in a Christian light or are rejected if incompatible with the Christian background. A result is that the Greek idea of a *Cosmos* is simply discarded in favour of the idea of God as the highest reality.

#### 3.2 The articulate advocates of Christian philosophy

(a) *Augustine (354-430AD)* says empiricism is a method that seeks knowledge through positivism. Empiricism attempts to discover interrelatedness between sensory impressions. For the empiricist ideas begin with sensory experience. By rational induction they are transformed into empirical knowledge. Human reason is capable of revealing the truth.

#### (b) The concepts of logic reason and faith

*Logic* leads man to *God*, but *faith* makes it possible for him to *make full use of reason*. Only *God* is the *truth* and the *light* for *rational spirit*. *Reason* implements *faith*, and that *knowledge* is *ultimately faced on faith in God*. Augustine philosophy is that from the creation onwards changes have taken place and will continue to do so until the end of the world. The *hereafter* is constant and not subject to changes. Everything moves towards its ultimate end.

(c) *Saint Thomas of Aquinas (1225-1274 AD)* regards philosophy as the study of the nature of ultimate reality, and, for him, of a *Deity* as the *first cause*. The *Deity*, as *first Cause*, to consider every phenomenon if one desired an ultimate explanation.

#### 3.3 God as highest reality and also called creator

God is the highest reality and, as the final cause of all that exists. He is called the *Creator*. This implies that the world, which is created by God, is an ordained and orderly universe. All that exists is dependent on God and is constantly maintained by Him. Human thought is limited because things are accessible only to God's understanding. *Man* knows reality *incompletely*: he can know reality in the form of concepts, but *ultimate reality* is *hidden from man*:

### 3.3.1 Christian philosophy as realism

The key note of philosophy becomes realism. The Greeks viewed man as a microcosm reflecting the greater reality. The Mediaeval philosopher views man as a creation amongst created things. A creature who knows reality only views concepts and not by participation in reality. *Concepts are images of reality*. Reality has a structure which is reproducible in our concepts.

### 3.3.2 The religious order

Greek concept of order consist in relations of form. The mediaeval concept of order is a religious order, the aim of which is the realization of the will of God. The destiny of the universe is thus the communion of the saints, which is attainable only through the grace of God. This involves that man can achieve this goal through meditation on holy matters and through leading a moral life. The glory of a man consists in the realization of the good, which means to act and think in accordance with the will of God and revered the natural order created by God himself.

## IV. Summary and conclusion

### 4.1 Summary

Mediaeval philosophy is basically a Christian philosophy and the realization that God is the highest reality and, as the final cause of all that exist. He is called the Creator. This implies that the world, which is created by God, is an ordained and orderly universe. All that in existence is entirely dependent on God and is constantly maintained by Him. What is supremely important is that human reason and capacity for thought is limited because things are accessible only to God's understanding. Man knows reality incompletely; he can know reality in the form of terms and concepts. But ultimate reality is hidden from man.

### 4.2 Conclusion

The conclusion is reached that logic leads man to god, but faith makes it possible for him to make full use of the light for national spirit. Reason implements faith and that knowledge is ultimately faced on faith in God.

## Bibliography

- [1] J. Ayer: Language, truth and logic: 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. New York: Dower Publications, 1937.
- [2] Arnold Brecht: Political Theory: Twentieth Century Foundations of Political Thought: New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1967.
- [3] J. J. N. Cloete: Introduction to Public Administration: J. L. van Schaik, 1985
- [4] S. B. M. Marume: Public Administration: Epistemological and methodological aspects of African social research studies: work 17 unpublished PhD thesis proposal: California University for Advanced Studies, California, September 30, 1988.
- [5] S.B.M. Marume: Public Administration: special contemporary problems and challenges: LAP Lambert Academic Publishing: Berlin, German, 2015[ISBN978-3-659-75883-6].
- [6] C. T. Onions: The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary of 1959.

## Profiles of contributors and photographs



**Samson Brown Muchineripi Marume:** a former senior civil servant for over 37 years in various capacities and 10 years as deputy permanent secretary; ten years as a large commercial farmer; well travelled **domestically** within Zimbabwe; **regionally** [SADC countries: Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Mauritius, Swaziland, South Africa, Namibia, Tanzania, Zambia and DRC]; and **Africa** [Kenya, Ethiopia, Sudan, Egypt, Nigeria, Ghana, Libya, and Uganda]; and **internationally** [Washington, New York and California in USA; Dublin and Cork in Ireland; England in United Kingdom; Netherlands, Spain (Nice), France, Geneva in Switzerland, former Yugoslavia-Belgrade; Rome and Turin in Italy; Cyprus – Nicosia; Athens – Greece; Beijing and Great Walls of China; Singapore; Hong Kong; Tokyo, Kyoto, Yokohama, Osaka, in Japan]; ten years as management consultant and part – time lecturer for BA/BSc and MA/MBA levels with Christ College- affiliate of Great Zimbabwe University, and PhD/DPhil research thesis supervisor, internal and external examiner with Christ University, Bangalore, India, and Zimbabwe Open University; currently senior lecturer and acting chairperson of Department of Public Administration in Faculty of Commerce and Law of Zimbabwe Open University; a negotiator; a prolific writer as he has published five books, twenty five modules in public administration and political science for undergraduate and postgraduate students, and thirty seven journal articles in international journals [IOSR, SICA, IJESR, MRESR, IJSER, IJBMI, IJHSS and Quest Journals] on constitutional and administrative law, public administration, political science, philosophy, Africa in international politics, local government and administration, sociology and community development; vastly experienced public administrator; and a distinguished scholar with specialist qualifications from University of South Africa, and California University for Advanced Studies, State of California, United States of America: **BA** with majors in public administration and political science and subsidiaries in sociology, constitutional law and English; postgraduate special **Hons BA** [Public Administration], **MA** [Public Administration]; **MAdmin** magna cum laude in transport economics - as major, and minors in public management and communications; **MSoc Sc** cum laude in international politics as a major and minors in comparative government and law, war and strategic studies, sociology, and social science research methodologies; **PhD** summa cum laude in Public Administration .



**Roy Robson Jubenkanda:** 2008 currently pursuing DPhil studies with ZOU; dean of Commerce and Law for seven years; writer of a book on strategic leadership,

several modules on strategic management, corporate governance, strategic human resources, intermediate macro economics, labour economics, business management and entrepreneurship, project management and credit risk management; and over thirty articles with international journals on various subject areas; 2000, MSc in Strategic Management – University of Derby, U. K; MSc. Econ. In international Economics, Banking and Finance- University of Wales, Cardiff College of Business Studies, U.K.; 1983, BSc (Hons) Degree in Economics – University of Zimbabwe, Zimbabwe; 1976 Business Studies Diploma – Solusi University, Zimbabwe; 2005, Certificate in Distance Education Practitioner (UNISA); 2011, Certificate in Higher Education Management in Southern Africa (University of the Witwatersrand) Johannesburg, South Africa.



**Cornelius Wonder Namusi:** current studies: DPhil (candidate) in Public Administration; a writer of over thirty articles in international journals; Master of Public Administration (UZ); Bachelor of Administration Honours (UZ); 2011, Certificate: Module Writing; 2011, Certificate: Managing the training programme – ESAMI, Tanzania; 1990, Certificate advanced work study (Canada); 1986, Certificate: Organisation and methods O & M), Institute of Development Administration IDM – Botswana); 1983, Certificate in Labour Administration, African Regional Labour Administration Centre (ARLAC) (Nairobi); 1964, Primary Teachers Higher Certificate (PHT) Waddilove Teacher Training Institution, Marondera, Zimbabwe, Chairperson of department of management and Business Studies in the Faculty of Commerce and Law of Zimbabwe Open University



**N. C. Madziyire:** current studies; DPhil (Candidate); a writer of over twenty articles in various disciplines with international journals; Master of Education (Educational Administration) (UZ); Bachelor of Education (Curriculum studies and Teacher Education) (UZ); Diploma in Teacher Education (Dip TE) (UZ); Primary Teachers' Higher Certificate (St Augustine's); Senior lecturer in the Faculty of Arts and Education at the Zimbabwe Open University; Programme leader for The Bachelor of Education in Youth Development studies; I am also responsible for developing distance materials for distance learners.