

Topic 1. Philosophy and its place in human and social life

1. Philosophy – what is it?
2. The range of philosophy problems. Correlation between philosophy and science.
3. The philosophy knowledge structure.
4. The worldview (world image) and its historical varieties. Philosophy in the structure of worldview (world image).
5. Functions of philosophy.

1. Philosophy appeared one thousand years B.C. in the countries of Ancient world. But as the independent sphere of knowledge classical philosophy was formed in the 7th –6th centuries B.C. in Ancient Greece.

The exact translation of the term “philosophy” is “love to wisdom”, later – “searching for truth”. For the first time the term “philosopher” was used by Pythagoras; the term “philosophy” was introduced into science by Plato.

From the beginning the generalisation of all man’s knowledge about the world into the united system became the main task of philosophy. Also, the general notion about the world includes the idea of the human being who has the possibility of active and conscious influence on the world. So philosophy becomes the system of general knowledge about nature, society and man.

One of the most topical questions among students is what for we

are studying philosophy? The answers are different to each person.

The famous English philosopher B. Russell insisted that for people to change the world is to perfect morally and to self-perfect. Any science isn't interested in the questions of the good and the evil; it doesn't explain those aims we are reaching for, and it can't ground those ethical principles we are following. Philosophy can and must do it. So philosophy becomes the spiritual, rational and theoretical discovery of reality.

At the same time philosophy is practical and humane. Its aim is to teach a person to think independently and creatively, to understand the sense of life, to estimate correctly his or her abilities and the role in the world, to define the activity direction, to understand their participation in all things happening in the Universe.

So, **philosophy is the general knowledge about the world and the man's place in it.**

Besides, every philosophy is added and continued with the personal existential philosophic activity which begins with the questions: "What is the man? Who am I?"

2. Science begins from the daily life experience and the specific experiments but they are limited. If science deals with the unknown it means the mental sphere that is philosophy. So philosophy investigates the most general forms of humans' activities, and it

strives to generalise regularities discovered by other sciences most completely.

The subject of philosophy is the general regularities of nature, society and man as well as the relations between the objective reality and the subjective world.

It is important to define the borderline between philosophy and scientific knowledge.

1) the man builds the scientific world picture excludes himself and formulates the question: “What are the objective world laws?”;

the philosopher answers the question: “Who am I in this world?”.

2) the scientist receives exact knowledge to create the objective world picture;

the philosopher realises the self-consciousness function, he understands the contemporary consciousness and its sources.

3) it is important for science to create the theory which could be proved with the experiment;

philosophy discusses the world and what place the man occupies in it.

4) science works out concepts (mathematical, physical, chemical, etc.);

philosophy works out general concepts – categories.

5) the object in science is the things which are important for reception of the knowledge about the world;

philosophy presupposes free choice of the object of investigation.

In spite of these differences philosophy and science have very close connections.

Besides, philosophy is occupied with the so called “eternal” questions:

- What is the world and what is the man’s place in it?
- What is the basis of all being: material or spiritual?
- Can the man get to know the surrounding world?
- What is the sense of human life, its aim and its value?

Each philosophy system has its own main question. For Antiquity it was the question about the beginnings of all the being. For Socrates it was the idea about the self-cognition of man. The New Time brought to the foreground the question about the possibilities of cognition. Marxism asked what was first: spirit or material that was the question about the relation between the thought and the being, the spirit and the nature, the man and the world.

There were many other questions but the first and the last ones constitute the gnoseological opposition between the materialism and the idealism. These directions appeared from the choice of different philosophical beginnings (substance) of the world.

So **materialism** presupposes that the material is the primary element, it exists independently of consciousness. The consciousness here is secondary and derivative from the material.

Idealism insists on the primacy of consciousness which creates the material.

Also in philosophy there are dualism systems in which material and spiritual substances are equal.

However in philosophy there isn't only the substantial question. There are many directions which don't deal with this problem. Philosophy is based on the universal connection principle, on the unity of development.

So philosophy is also the knowledge about the universal principles and laws of development.

Therefore studying of philosophy educates in people the culture of intelligent thinking, gives the opportunity to choose the true decision, helps to separate the important things from the minor ones, opens the connections between the different phenomena of reality and reveals the oppositions in the surrounding reality.

3. There is the most general structure of the philosophy knowledge: the main parts – ontology, gnoseology and logic; the auxiliary parts – ethics, aesthetics and the history of philosophy. However in modern philosophy there are no exact boundaries and the problems usually intersect.

Ontology is the philosophy doctrine of the being.

So it is the doctrine about everything which exists.

Ontology is studying the most general being forms. The main categories used in ontology are: being and no-being, the material and the ideal, material, consciousness, space and time, move,

change, etc.

The structure of ontology includes three parts which study different being forms:

1) **nature philosophy** is studying the philosophy problems of nature;

2) **philosophical anthropology** is occupied with the philosophical problems of the human being;

3) **social philosophy** gives the philosophical analysis of the society phenomenon.

Gnoseology is the philosophy doctrine of cognition.

It studies the essence and the contents of cognition process. It discovers the relations between the subject and the object of cognition. Also, gnoseology considers the boundaries, the sources, the forms and the methods of cognition.

Logic is the doctrine of the thought laws.

There is formal and mathematical logics.

The auxiliary parts are ethics, aesthetics and the history of philosophy.

Ethics is the moral doctrine. It is divided into **ethology** (the science about the moral norms of definite societies) and **axiology** (the doctrine of the of human being values).

Aesthetics is the doctrine about the laws of beauty.

History of philosophy is not an independent part of philosophy; it considers the development of philosophical thought from the

beginning to our days. The history of philosophy is made up of its' different periods, stages, directions and schools.

4. Every philosophy is the kind of worldview but not every worldview (world image) can be called philosophy.

Worldview (world image) is the complex of the most general looks on the world, the persuasions and the ideals based on those looks as well as the man's attitude to life, the behaviour principles and the value orientation.

There are some components which form the worldview:

- 1) knowledge;
- 2) world picture;
- 3) society image (the relation between immediate micro- and the general macro-surrounding);
- 4) ideal of the man (the complex of the perfect man notion which is permanently changing);
- 5) notion about oneself (includes the understanding of a person's uniqueness);
- 6) life strategy (includes education, choice of the sample to follow, self-education, etc.).

Worldview (world image) is the result of the world reflection but the degree of that reflection can be different.

The first degree is formed on the sensation level. It is the so called world-sensation or world-contemplation when only separate

external manifestations of being are fixed.

The second degree is called world-perception or world-presentation because on this level the united world picture is constituted but mostly on the basis of senses.

The third degree is the world-understanding degree when the world is reflected with the help of concepts. This level is connected with the abstract thinking and theoretical cognition.

Philosophy represents namely this level. Philosophy could be defined as the highest worldview level or as theoretically designed, systematic and rational worldview.

In early societies there was no philosophy and its tasks were solved by the myth and religion. So we can outline the main historical kinds of worldview:

- mythological
- religious
- philosophical
- scientific

Mythological worldview is the man's first attempt to understand his being, to explain the origin and the structure of the world, the appearance of man and animals, to define his place in the world.

Mythology was the universal, figurative and symbolic form of world cognition and explaining. Human characteristics were projected on the nature phenomena. Mythological creatures were acting like people, they also had destiny. The world in the people's

mind at that time was united, man and nature were indissoluble.

Religious worldview is based on the faith in the supernatural forces and their major role in the world and man's life.

Like philosophy, religion satisfies people's needs in understanding of the surrounding world and their life. So both philosophy and religion have a similar task but also they have important differences:

- 1) philosophy is based on the rational and theoretical knowledge;
religion is based on the faith in something super natural.
- 2) philosophy must be free of dogmas, it must not be limited by any authorities and it must have a possibility to doubt about everything;
religion needs authorities and accepts the truth by faith.
- 3) philosophy tries to make the notion about the world united;
religion divides the world into "earthly", natural, cognitive, and "heavenly", supernatural, transcendental.

Philosophical worldview heads for the rational explanation of the world. This type of world-outlook has succeeded from mythological and religious ones, summing up their character and questions.

Scientific worldview is formed on the cognition basis of the nature and society development laws that make science and philosophy close to each other.

Each man has as a rule eclectic worldview which includes

characteristics of different world-outlooks. It is so called ordinary worldview but there are some people who can take pride in the pure type of worldview – for example, philosophical though is not frequent.

So our worldview is a prism and through it we perceive the surrounding world.

5. There are some philosophy functions which define the philosophy place in culture and society in general.

1) The worldview function means that philosophy creates the system of looks on the world and the human's place in it from the rational and the conceptual position. No science can perform this function because special sciences have as their subject only a fragment of reality. Only philosophy, generalising knowledge though each science can change the world picture, produce new ideas and methods of cognition.

2) The gnoseological function includes the cognition theory which is always the relation between the man and the world, the subject and the object. Only in such a way we can reach the truth – the aim of all cognition and it is the eternal question of philosophy.

3) The methodological function deals with cultivating of general and particular cognition methods, with working out of basic cognitive principles.

4) The integrative function means that philosophy unites the

knowledge of different disciplines in the united system. It helps scientists to make the right choice when defining their place in the scientific society.

5) The critical function plays anti-dogma role in the philosophy and science development. It deals with constructive philosophical critics.

6) The axiological function presupposes orientation at certain values. Each philosophical system contains the estimation moment of the object under investigation. The particular role of this function reveals itself during transitive periods of history when the former value system is being ruined and it becomes necessary to reconsider the latter one.

7) The sociological function helps to explain the social being and to change it spiritually and materially. Namely, philosophy is occupied with cultivating of general conception of integration and consolidation of society. So philosophy helps people when they are on the edge and when they must make a choice.

8) The prognostic function means forming of general tendencies of human and world development hypotheses and basing of new world-understanding, as it has already been in the history of philosophy.

All philosophy functions correlate with each other. Besides there are other philosophy functions: theoretical, ontological, hermeneutical, etc.

So philosophy has a great meaning in human and social life. It teaches us to think, helps to come to the high problems, it also holds on the science of aimless accumulation of knowledge.