



NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA
FACULTY OF ARTS, DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

COURSE CODE:

PHL 106

COURSE TITLE:

INTRODUCTION TO PROBLEMS OF PHILOSOPHY

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COURSE GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to **PHL 106: Introduction to Problems of Philosophy**.

PHL 106 is a three-credit unit course that has minimum duration of one semester. It is a compulsory course for all Philosophy degree students in the university. The course is expected to introduce the various problems in Philosophy right from the inception of the discipline from Ancient period through to the medieval, to contemporary times. The aim is that students would be able to read understand some core problems that define the discipline Philosophy. These are core problems that philosophers have been discussing from ancient period till now.

Course Objectives

By the end of this course you will be able to:

- Identify the core problems in Philosophy.
- Know the philosophers associated with the problems.
- Explain the problems.
- Discuss the problems in details.
- Examine the various views about the problem
- Know the various reactions to philosopher's discussion of the problem
- Identify alternative views on the problem
- Attempt solutions to the problems if there are any.

Working through this Course

To successfully complete this course, read the study units, listen to the audios and videos, do all assessments, open the links and read, participate in discussion forums, read the recommended

books and other materials provided prepare your portfolios, and participate in the online facilitation.

Each study unit has introduction, intended learning outcomes, the main content, conclusion, summary and references/further readings. The introduction will tell you the expectations in the study unit. Read and note the intended learning outcomes (ILOs). The intended learning outcomes will tell you what you should be able to do at the completion of each study unit. Click on the links as may be directed but where you are reading the text off line, you will have to copy and paste the link address into a browser. You can download the audios and videos off line. You can also print or download the texts and save in your computer or external drive.

The conclusion gives you the theme of the knowledge you are taking away from the unit. Unit summaries are presented in downloadable audios and videos.

There are two main forms of assessments – the formative and the summative. The formative assessments will help you monitor your learning. This is presented as in text questions, discussion forums and Self-Assessment Exercises.

The summative assessments would be used by the University to evaluate your academic performance. This will be given as Computer Based Test (CBT) which serves as continuous assessment and final examinations. A minimum of two or maximum of three computer-based tests will be given with only one final examination at the end of the semester. You are required to take all the computer based tests and the final examination.

Study Units

There are 24 study units in this course divided into four modules. The modules and units are presented as follows:

Module 1

- Unit 1: The Problem One and Many
- Unit 2: The Problem of Change and Permanence
- Unit 3: The Problem of Being

Module 2

- Unit 1: The Problem of Substance
- Unit 2: The Problem Existence and Essence
- Unit 3: Universals and Particulars

Module 3

- Unit 1: Cause and Effect
- Unit 2: Problem of Appearance and Reality
- Unit 3: Problem of the Existence of God

Module 4

- Unit 1: The Mind /Body Problem
- Unit 2: Freewill and Determinism
- Unit 3: The Problem of Evil

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THE PRESENTATION SCHEDULE

The presentation schedule gives you the important dates for the completion of your computer-based tests, participation in forum discussions and participation at facilitation. Remember, you are to submit all your assignments at the appropriate time. You should guard against delays and plagiarisms in your work. Plagiarism is a criminal offense in academics and is highly penalized.

Assessment

There are two main forms of assessments in this course that will be scored. The Continuous Assessments and the Final Examination. The continuous assessment shall be in three fold. **There will be two Computer Based Assessments. The computer-based assessments will be given in accordance to university academic calendar. The timing must be strictly adhered to.** The Computer Based Assessments shall be scored a maximum of 10% each, while your participation in discussion forums and your portfolio presentation shall be scored maximum of 10% if you meet 75% participation. Therefore, the maximum score for continuous assessment shall be 30% which shall form part of the final grade.

The final examination for PHL 106 will be maximum of three hours and it takes 70 percent of the total course grade. The examination will consist of 5 questions out of which you are expected to answer 4.

Note: You will earn 10% score if you meet a minimum of 75% participation in the course forum discussions and in your portfolios otherwise you will lose the 10% in your total score. You will be required to upload your portfolio using google Doc. What are you expected to do in your portfolio? Your portfolio should be note or jottings you made on each study unit and activities. This will include the time you spent on each unit or activity.

How to get the Most from the Course

To get the most in this course, you need to have a personal laptop and internet facility. This will give you adequate opportunity to learn anywhere you are in the world. Use the Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) to guide your self-study in the course. At the end of every unit, examine yourself with the ILOs and see if you have achieved what you need to achieve.

Carefully work through each unit and make your notes. Join the online real time facilitation as scheduled. Where you missed the scheduled online real time facilitation, go through the recorded facilitation session at your own free time. Each real time facilitation session will be video recorded and posted on the platform.

In addition to the real time facilitation, watch the video and audio recorded summary in each unit. The video/audio summaries are directed to salient part in each unit. You can assess the audio and videos by clicking on the links in the text or through the course page.

Work through all self-assessment exercises. Finally, obey the rules in the class.

Facilitation

You will receive online facilitation. The facilitation is learner-centered. The mode of facilitation shall be asynchronous and synchronous.

For the asynchronous facilitation, your facilitator will:

- Present the theme for the week;
- Direct and summarize forum discussions;
- Coordinate activities in the platform;
- Score and grade activities when need be;
- Upload scores into the university recommended platform;
- Support you to learn. In this regard personal mails may be sent;
- Send you videos and audio lectures; and podcast

For the synchronous:

There will be a minimum of eight hours and a maximum of twelve online real time contacts in the course. This will be through video conferencing in the Learning Management System. The sessions are going to be run at an hour per session at the end of each one-hour video conferencing

in the Learning Management System. The sessions are going to be run at an hour per session. At the end of each one-hour video conferencing, the video will be uploaded for view at your pace.

The facilitator will concentrate on main themes that are must know in the course. The facilitator is to present the online real time video facilitation time table at the beginning of the course.

The facilitator will take you through the course guide in the first lecture at the start date of facilitation.

Do not hesitate to contact your facilitator. Contact your facilitator if you:

- Do not understand any part of the study units or the assignment
- Have difficulty with the self-assessment exercises
- Have a question or problem with an assignment or with your tutor's comments on an assignment.

Also, use the contact provided for technical support.

Read assignments, participate in the forums and discussions. This gives you opportunity to socialize with others in the programme. You can raise any problem encountered during your study. To gain the maximum benefit from course facilitation, prepare a list of questions before the discussion session. You will learn a lot from participating actively in the discussions.

Finally, respond to the questionnaire. This will help the university to know your areas of challenges and how to improve on them for the review of the course materials and lectures.

SUMMARY

In conclusion, PHL 106: Introduction to Problems of Philosophy provides you with the main problems that philosophers of old even till now grappled with. It will enable you to understand the focus of issues discussed in Philosophy till date.

CONCLUSION

All the modules in this course will guide you to achieve the aims and objectives of the course. The self-assessment exercises and answers provided will refresh your learning on the issues discussed in the various units. There are links to videos which you can watch for more learning experience. The units also include pictures of Philosophers so that you can have a virtual idea of the philosophers under discuss.

Wish you a pleasant study and success in your examination

MODULE 1

UNIT 1: THE PROBLEM OF ONE AND MANY

UNIT 2: THE PROBLEM OF CHANGE AND PERMANENCE

UNIT 3: THE PROBLEM OF BEING

UNIT 1: THE PROBLEM OF ONE AND MANY

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1.4.2. Idealism

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1.7. Conclusion

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1.9. Self-Assessment Exercise

1.9.1. Answer to Self-Assessment Exercise

References/Further Readings

1.0. Introduction

There are some basic problems in philosophy which are peculiar to the discipline. Although peculiar, they enjoy some attention from other disciplines like biology, medicine and other sciences. They are age-longed problems which have been discussed all over the years. In other

words, these problems are as old as humanity itself. They are often referred to as “philosophical problems”. The problems include: the problem of substance, the problem of personal identity, problem of being, unity and diversity, otherwise known as the problem of one and many, universals and particulars, appearance and reality, change and permanence and reality, change and permanence, essence and existence, cause and effect, mind-body interaction, freedom and determinism or otherwise called freewill and determinism; truth and falsehood.

These are issues and problems which philosophers discussed overtime even until present day. That is, these problems enjoy contemporary relevance. Most of these problems are metaphysical in nature. This is because their answers are rooted in things beyond sensory inspection, thus, and cannot be answered empirically nor can they be answered dogmatically but critically as they are uniquely philosophical. In this course we are going to discuss these problems and examine how various philosophers through the ages have made contributions to the discussion and how they have attempted to resolve these problems through theories propounded. In this unit we are going to discuss one of the problems of philosophy known as the problem of one and many.

1.1. Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

By the end of this unit you would be able to:

- Explain the problem of one and many in philosophy
- Identify the schools of thought of the problem of one and many
- Identify the philosophers who discussed the problem
- Give examples to illustrate the problem
- Give attempted solutions to the problem

1.2. Main Content

1.3. What is the problem of one and many?

The problem of one and many in philosophy can also be referred to as the problem of unity and diversity. It is closely related to the problem of change and permanence which we shall discuss in the next unit. This problem spurred out of philosophers attempts to answer questions such as; what is the originative substance of the universe? What constitutes the universe? What is the ultimate

constituent of the universe? Philosophers of antiquity are curious to know the nature of the world and in their quest, they want to know what reality consists of. They want to be able to account for the vast number of objects and phenomena in the world and find the one thing that is behind all things in the universe. They want to identify the nitty-gritty or essence of the universe. Thus, questions about whether reality is one or many are being asked. If reality is one, is it spiritual or physical or is it a combination of both? If it is a combination of both, does physical supervene on spiritual or vice-versa? It may even be the case that there are many realities. In that case are they spiritual or material. If material, there are essence such as fire, water, air, or atoms. It could be an idea, such as “mind” or number. It could also be spiritual or divine, such as we have in the Christian concept of God or Buddhism or Chinese concept of Shang-ti, the “Lord on High”. The main issue is trying to figure out what that one, unifying thing or idea is. In short, the presence of change cannot be denied in the world, yet one can notice underlying unity and permanence. The answer to the quest for the nature of reality generated two main schools of thought that are called monism and dualism.

1.4. Monism

Monism is a school of thought in metaphysics that postulate that reality is one. Monism denies the existence of duality or dual. Monism argues that all that there is can be sufficiently explained using one thing. However, philosophers differ on what this one this entail or constitute. Monists are of the view that reality is one and it is either spiritual/idea or physical/matter. In other words, there is no unanimous agreement among philosophers as regard the nature of this one thing. However, there are two main strands of philosophers as regard the nature of this ‘one thing’. Namely, the materialists or physicalists who uphold materialism and the idealists who uphold idealism.

1.4.1. Materialism or Physicalism

Materialism or physicalism is a metaphysical theory according to which reality is one and it is physical or material. They uphold that matter is the ultimate constituent of the universe. This matter, they argued, is empirically verifiable. Proponents of this school of thought are called the materialist or the physicalist. They can be further grouped into two. Namely, Radical materialist and moderate materialist. Radical materialist uphold that the universe is made up of matter alone while modest materialist assert that matter is the main constituent of the universe and those that

are not matter will rely on matter in their final analysis for their existence. In order of importance, matter is primary while idea or non-matter is secondary according to the modest materialist.

1.4.2. Idealism

Idealism is a school of thought according to which reality is one and that reality is idea or non-matter. It is a standpoint according to which idea or spirit is the ultimate constituent of the universe. Philosophers who subscribe to this school of thought are called the idealists. They can be further grouped into two. Namely, radical or extreme idealist and modest or mitigated idealist. Radical idealist are idealist philosophers that avers that the universe is made of only one reality which is idea. On the other hand, mitigated idealists assert that the universe is made up of idea but those that are not directly from idea are in their final analysis dependent on idea for their existence. In other words, for modest idealists, in the constitution of reality, some are from idea, but those that are not directly from idea are in their final analysis dependent on idea. In order of importance, idea is primary and matter is secondary.

1.5. Dualism

Dualism is a synthesis of materialism and idealism. It is a mid-point between materialism and idealism. Dualism synergies materialism with idealism. Dualism is a school of thought that postulate that reality or what is real is many or more than one. Dualists are of the view that reality is of two nature which is the material and spiritual and idea. In other words, reality or what is real or what constitute the universe is a combination of matter and idea or spirit.

We shall examine the views of some philosophers on the unity or diversity of realities in the world.

1.6. Philosophers' view on the problem of one and many

The first known philosophers, Thales, Anaximander and Anaximenes



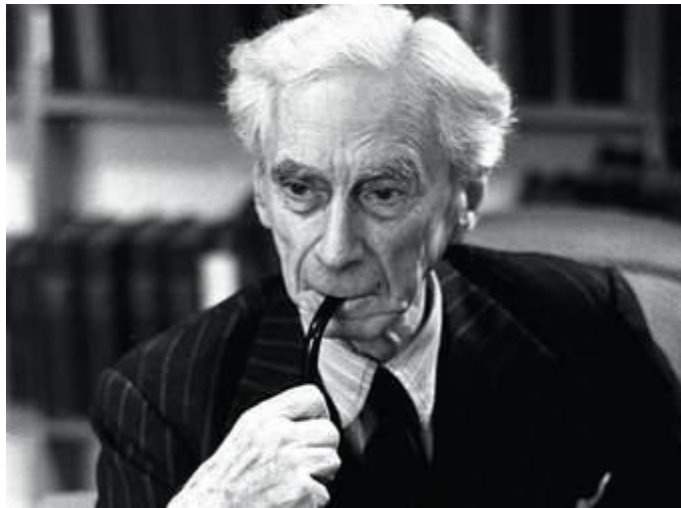
are philosophers of antiquity who uphold materialism. Thales assert that reality is one and made up of water. From water, all other entities emanated from. Anaximander assert that reality is made up of *aperion* while Anaximenes assert that reality is made of water. These elements proffered by each of the philosophers is empirically verifiable. Collectively, they are called monist-materialist. In contemporary times, examples of materialists include Karl Marx, Thomas Hobbes, Friedrich Engels, among others.



Immanuel Kant (1724-1804),



George Berkeley (1685-1753),



Bertrand Russell (1872-1970)

are examples of philosophers who argued that idea or spirit is the ultimate constituent of reality. For Berkeley, he argued that only minds and mental contents exist. According to Berkeley, to be is to be perceived. Common to idealist philosophers, they assert that idea or spirit is the underlying element of everything in the universe.

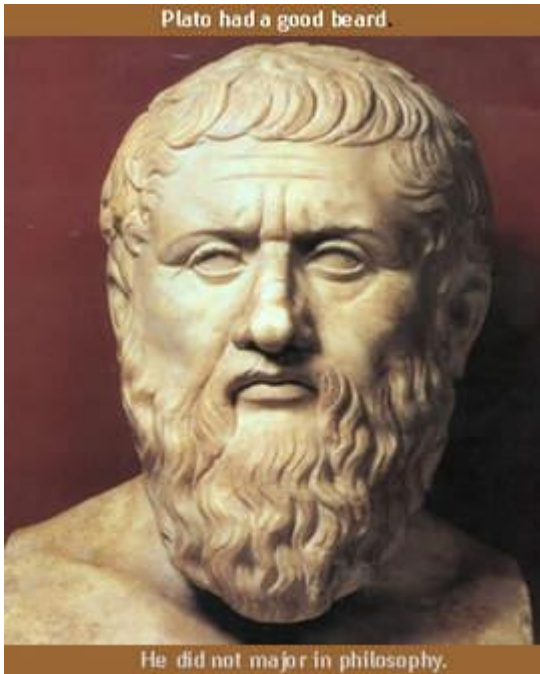


Examples of dualists are Rene Descartes



Geulincx, Malebranche

They recognise spiritual and physical substances.



Plato

Plato recognised two types of worlds and these are the world of particulars and world of forms. The world of forms according to Plato constitutes the world of reality and it is the intelligible world and also known as the world of universals. Whereas, the visible world is the world of physical objects, it is a world of appearances which imitates the world of forms. Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646-1716) agrees with Plato that realities are many and spiritual and he calls the realities *Monads*. Unlike Plato's realities that exist in the world of forms, Leibniz says that the realities exist in the physical world.

1.7. Conclusion

In this unit, we have examined the problem of one and many otherwise known as the problem of unity and diversity in Philosophy. In doing this, we examined the three main schools of thought in the problem of one and many and the ideologies they uphold. This unit also reviewed some philosophers' positions on the problem of one and many.

1.8. Summary

The following is the summary of what you have learnt in this unit.

- The problem of one and many is one of the numerous philosophical problems.

- That one and many are the postulates of philosophers in the explanation of things, phenomena and objects in the universe.
- There are three main schools of thought in the problem of one and many.
- That objects and things in the universe can be viewed as material or spiritual or both material and spiritual.
- The spiritual can be ideas in the mind.
- The spiritual can also exist in the world of forms.

1.9. Self-Assessment Exercise

1. How can the problem of one and many be stated in Philosophy?
2. How many schools of thought can the problem of one and many generate?

1.9.1. Answer to Self-Assessment Exercise

1. Philosophers wanted to know the nature of the world and what reality consists of. They want to be able to account for the vast number of objects and phenomena in the world and find the one thing that is behind all things in the universe. Thus, questions about whether reality is one or many are being asked. If reality is one, is it spiritual or physical or is it a combination of both? It may even be the case that there are many realities. In that case are they spiritual or material. The main issue is trying to figure out what that one, unifying thing or idea is.
2. The problem of one and many can generate three schools of thought namely monism and dualism.

References/Further Readings

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UNIT 2: THE PROBLEM OF CHANGE AND PERMANENCE

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- 1.5.Summary
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- 1.7.Answer to Self-Assessment Exercise
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1.0.Introduction

The problem of change and permanence is one of the problems in philosophy also addressed. This problem can be dated back as far back as the ancient period. Philosophers of antiquity and contemporary time has been befuddled with the nature of the universe and its constituent. Is the universe and things in it constant or permanent? Is change a necessary factor for existence? Is change the essence of reality? These questions constitute the problem of change and permanence in philosophy. These questions, philosopher and scholars (within and outside the academia) have attempted to proffer an answer to.

1.1. Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

By the end of this unit you would be able to:

- Explain the problem of change and permanence
- Identify the philosophers who discussed the problem
- Give examples to illustrate the problem
- Give attempted solutions to the problem

1.2. Main Content

1.3. What is the problem of change and permanence?

The problem of change and permanence has been an old problem in philosophy. In fact, it is as old as philosophy itself. The problem can be explained briefly as the occurrence of natural change and changes in the world and the continuance of some apparent permanent conditions. How does one reconcile the apparent occurrence of change in the universe with obvious permanent conditions?

1.3.1. The problem explained

There are noticeable and apparent changes in the world, yet there is permanence and continuity. So, which one is primary out of the two? Is it the change or permanence? If everything changes, there can be nothing permanent. If there is permanent entity, it cannot change. How are the permanent and changing attributes of the universe compatible?

1.3.2. Two Great Extremes

There are two great opposing extremes propounded by two philosophers on the answer to the problem of change and permanence. The two philosophers are Heraclitus and Parmenides. Heraclitus, a native of Ephesus who lived around 500 B.C. upholds that change is a basic law of the universe. Everything to him is in a state of perpetual flux. In other words, everything is in constant flux. According to Heraclitus, in one of the fragments of his works, you cannot step into the same river twice for fresh waters are ever flowing. Reality then is ever changing. Things come into being and pass away. Conflict is good according to Heraclitus. The hidden law of nature according to Heraclitus is that all things live by conflict, which is therefore essential and thus good. The essence of everything is conflict. Nothing for him is stable or constant because everything is in the process of change. Thus, Heraclitus is against empirical knowledge. He asserted that eyes and ears are bad witnesses of the soul and does not understand their language. Eyes and ears are perceptual. They represent knowledge acquired through the senses. So, knowledge collected through the senses must be understood by the soul. Knowledge acquired through the senses are not reliable. This is because changeability of the senses itself. Change as postulated by Heraclitus has a fire-like behavior. This is because fire behaves in such a way as to suggest how the process of change operates. Heraclitus believed that fire is intelligent. The fire is rational because everything through fire, there is destruction of things and rejuvenation of new entities.

Parmenides a younger contemporary of Heraclitus lived between sixth and seventh century B.C from the city of Elea in southern Italy. He was of the founder of the famous Eleatic school of philosophy. He was a very brilliant philosopher who re-define philosophy in the ancient days. Parmenides was so prominent in his thought that Plato dedicated one dialogue in studying him. He propounded that change is an illusion of the senses, that being is one and unchanging. Parmenides maintained that motion is not possible as opposed to Heraclitus notion that motion is possible. There is then no change in reality. He rejected the claim of Heraclitus. To him there is no becoming, nothing comes into being and nothing goes into being, being simply is and does not change. For Parmenides, to be = is/it is. Parmenides avers that to say change is real will imply that an entity can both be, it is and it is not, which would be contradicting. Parmenides derived the attribute of reality, that which is, from the premise, it is, in Greek means *ESTI*. Thus, for Parmenides, reality is eternal, motionless, indivisible and spherical.

1.3.3. Reactions to Heraclitus and Parmenides

Philosophers after Heraclitus and Parmenides tried to reconcile the two opposing views of Heraclitus and Parmenides on the problem of change and permanence. Such philosophers include: Empedocles, Anaxagoras, Leucippus and Democritus, Plato, and Aristotle. The medieval philosophers like St Thomas Aquinas and German Idealists in the modern period also discussed change and permanence. In spite of the extreme positions postulated by Parmenides and Heraclitus, experience in the world today seems to prove to us that change is a basic feature of this world. Nothing is permanent.

1.4. Conclusion

Experience in the world today seems to prove to us that change is a basic feature of this world. Nothing is permanent. The world today is a global village with new experiences coming on board each day. Nonetheless, this is not to argue that Heraclitus' claim is more plausible. But for the sake of sanity in the society, Heraclitus' claim should be tentatively upheld.

1.5. Summary

The problem of permanence and change generated a lot of controversy in philosophy. The two main philosophers that discussed the problem are Heraclitus and Parmenides. These philosophers

uphold two opposing views. However, attempts have been made by philosophers and scholars after them to merge these opposing views.

1.6. Self-Assessment Exercise

1. What is the problem of permanence and change?
2. Mention two major philosophers who discussed the problem of permanence and change.

1.7. Answer to Self-Assessment Exercise

1. There are noticeable and apparent changes in the world, yet there is permanence and continuity. So, which one is primary out of the two? Is it the change or permanence?
2. The two philosophers that discussed change and permanence are Heraclitus and Parmenides

References/Further Readings

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UNIT 3: THE PROBLEM OF BEING

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 - 1.4. Philosophers View of Being
 - 1.5. Conclusion
 - 1.6. Summary
 - 1.7. Self- Assessment Exercises
 - 1.8. Answer to Self-Assessment Exercise
- References/Further Readings

1.0. Introduction

The problem of being is one of the numerous metaphysical problems in philosophy confronting scholars and philosophers of antiquity and contemporary time. Metaphysics is a branch of philosophy that deals with issues beyond human sensory inspection. Such as the problem of being. In philosophy, the concept being connotes an ontological meaning. In other words, the concept being is used existentially. That is, being in philosophy means to exist. Thus, the problem of being is a metaphysical problem in philosophy that concerns itself with the ontological status of an entity and under what condition(s) can an entity be said to exist.

1.1. Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

By the end of this unit you would be able to:

- Discuss the problem of Being
- Identify the philosophers who discussed the problem
- Give attempted solutions to the problem

1.2. Main Content

1.3. What is the problem of being?

The problem of being is one of the earliest and most fundamental problems in philosophy. It is one of the central questions in metaphysics. What does it mean to exist? The problem can be simply

stated as what is being? The problem dates back to the pre-Socratic philosophers to contemporary thought. In philosophy, being connotes and stands for the existence of a thing. Anything that exists has being. Being includes in a comprehensive manner the objective and subjective parts of reality and existence. The sub-branch of philosophy that discusses the study of being is called ontology. Ontology is an aspect of metaphysics that concerns itself with the problem of being or the problem of existence.

1.4. Philosophers View of Being

One of the earliest philosophers to discuss the problem of being is Parmenides. According to Parmenides, whatever 'is', is being. Parmenides wrote in verses. Parmenides claimed to have received revelations of about his poem from the goddess *Muses*. *Muses* are inspirer of intellectual creator. Parmenides poem has two parts, namely, way of truth and way of seeming. In other words, Parmenides argued that existence can be viewed in two ways. Way of truth which is premised on "it is", while Way of seeming is premised on "it is" and "it is not". Way of seeming is however contradictory. That means whatever exist, "is". The words: is, are, and am refers to 'being' directly or indirectly. To him, being is one not multiple, it is eternal and does not change. To be = is = To exist. The senses may deceive us to think that being is multiple but being is not multiple and it is unchanging. Reason according to Parmenides and unlike the senses tells us that being is eternal and unchanging. Thus, we can label Parmenides as a monist.

Parmenides view strongly influenced Plato who came after him in the discussion on being. Plato maintains that being is eternal and unchanging like Parmenides. However, according to Plato even when we notice things changing in the world they belong to the world of appearances and not reality or world of forms. World of appearance is an imitation and reflection of realities. Realities can only be found in the world of forms. However, unlike Parmenides, Plato can be labeled as a dualist because being according to him is many and not one.

Aristotle says that it is the foundation and unity of all things. He identifies being with God. Being or pure being is God. St Thomas Aquinas a medieval philosopher also followed Aristotle and identified 'Being' as 'Being with God'. However, God is 'Being' par excellence whereas creatures are beings in analogical sense. In other words, only God is the main and only Being out of which

other beings derive. In the same vein, Meister Eckhart maintained that entities receive beingness derivatively from God because only God inherently possesses beingness. Outside God, there is pure nothingness, argued Meister Eckhart. Other philosophers that discussed the problem of being are Friedrich Hegel, Jean–Paul Sartre, Gabriel Marcel, Dun Scotus and William of Ockham.

1.5. Conclusion

The problem of being is one of the issues discussed in philosophy. It is one of the central questions in metaphysics. The problem dates back to the pre-Socratic philosophers to contemporary thought. The problem can be simply stated as what does it mean to exist/to be? Philosophers have made numerous attempts to proffer solutions to this problem. This is evident in the writings of ancient philosophers like Parmenides, Plato, Aristotle. In contemporary time, it can be found in the works of existentialist philosophers like Jean–Paul Sartre, and other philosophers like Friedrich Hegel. In the next module, the problem of substance would be addressed and its relevance to philosophy.

1.6. Summary

The sub-branch of philosophy that discusses the study of being is called ontology. Ontology is an aspect of metaphysics that concerns itself with the problem of being or the problem of existence. Parmenides is the first known philosopher to explicitly address the problem of being. Parmenides maintained that through reasoning, being is eternal and unchanging. Other philosophers that have discussed the problem of being include Plato, Aristotle, Meister Eckhart, among others.

1.7. Self-Assessment Exercise

1. In what way can Plato be called a dualist?
2. Who is the first known philosopher to address the problem of being?
3. The sub-branch of philosophy that discusses the study of being is called?

1.8. Answer to Self-Assessment Exercise

1. Plato postulated that realities can be found in the World of Forms.
2. Parmenides
3. Ontology

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MODULE 2

UNIT 1: PROBLEM OF SUBSTANCE

UNIT 2: EXISTENCE AND ESSENCE

UNIT 3: PROBLEM OF UNIVERSALS AND PARTICULARS

Unit 1: PROBLEM OF SUBSTANCE

Contents

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- 2.3. What is the problem of Substance?
- 2.4. Conclusion
- 2.5. Summary
- 2.6. Self-Assessment Exercise
- 2.7. Answer to Self-Assessment Exercise
- References/Further Readings

2.0. Introduction

The problem of substance is one of the problems of philosophy. Philosophers of old want to know what substance is. The word substance is from two Latin words *Sub* (under) and *Stans* (standing). The literary meaning is standing under. Substances can be described as the ontologically basic being, that is, the things from which everything else is made. The early philosophers before Aristotle such as Thales postulated that substance was water, Anaximenes claimed that everything was a form of air and Anaximander said the stuff of which everything else was made is indeterminate. Democritus described substance as 'atoms' to be the substance of the universe. Plato did not agree with the early materialist philosophers in their postulation of substance as material things but he located substance in the 'Forms'. Things in the universe are a copy of the intelligible thing in the world of Forms'. Substance is thus something that can be likened to a foundation of a thing, something that is durable, the absolute. It is the stuff of which things are made and they are kinds of objects being.

The substance of a thing distinguishes it from that of another. In short it is the essence of a thing. The substance of an entity represents its uniqueness from other entities within and outside a given species. It can be likened to what we call the DNA in contemporary times. What then is substance to philosophers?

2.1. Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

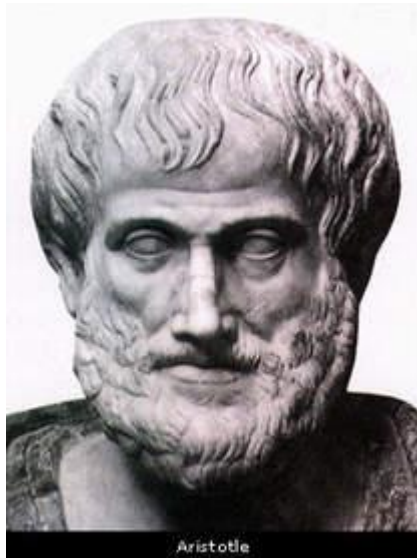
By the end of this unit you would be able to:

- Explain the problem of substance
- Identify the philosophers who discussed the problem
- Give attempted solutions to the problem

2.3. Main Content

2.4. What is the problem of substance?

Various philosophers and scholars have defined substance differently. Aristotle



Aristotle

According to Aristotle, substance is different from accident features. To Aristotle, substance has two properties. Namely, necessary properties and accidental properties. Aristotle assert that what substance has both necessary properties and accidental properties. Necessary properties are properties of an object in which their absence implies an absence of the object. Necessary properties are like the essence of an entity. It is that which exists on its own. Accidental properties are properties whose absence or presence does not determine the existence or otherwise of an entity. Accidental properties are whatever cannot exist on its own but can only inhere other things. It is the specific nature of a thing.



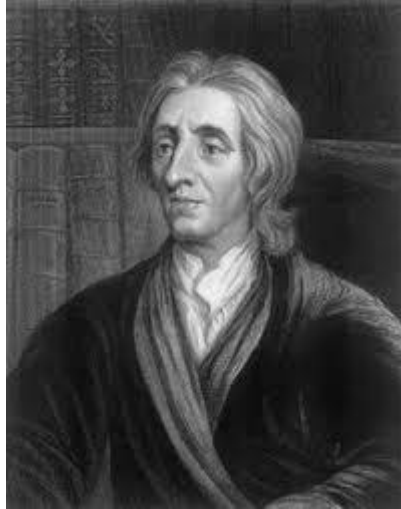
Rene Descartes (1596 – 1650)

Descartes in the Modern period describes substance as an existence which requires nothing but



itself to exist. However, Baruch Spinoza (1632 – 1677) describes this substance that requires nothing but itself to exist as God. God in Spinoza's view is substance, and nature.

Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646 – 1716) one of the medieval philosophers, postulates that substance is the most basic constituent in all things; He calls this basic element Monads. So, all substances consist of monads. Leibniz further posit that these basic elements exist independent of the mind.



John Locke (1632- 1704)

Locke is of the opinion that substance can be found in things. Substance to him do exist but we cannot know it but it can be found in qualities that things inhere it. In other words, for Locke, substance exist, however, we do not have the capacity/capability to perceive the substance itself. For Locke, what we can perceive are only the qualities of the substance.

Quality is the power in the object to cause or to produce ideas in the mind. There are two main types of quality, primary and secondary. Primary qualities are the qualities that determine the essence of an object. They are inherent in the object. In other words, they are inseparable from the object. They are those qualities without which a thing or an object would cease to exist to be what it is. Examples are extension, figure, solidity. Secondary qualities are powers in the object to produce different sensations in the mind by their primary qualities. Examples are color, sound, taste, etc. the arrangement of the primary qualities would determine the nature of the secondary qualities. Primary qualities determine the existence of the substance. While secondary qualities depend on the primary qualities, primary qualities depend on the substance for their existence. There are two senses in which the relationship between the substance and the qualities can be conceived. First, Locke could be interpreted to mean that the substance is the foundation of the qualities. Secondly, Locke could be interpreted to mean that substance is the summation of the qualities. However, Locke rejected the first interpretation because it would lead to infinite regress. The foundation of substance would be required and that foundation would need another foundation, *ad infinitum*.

For Locke, all that we know about the nature of substance are the qualities affecting our senses in diverse ways. Locke further argued that by the operation of the mind (volition, will), the mind conceptualizes and produces a term to designate that recurring ideas. Red is not red, red is just human linguistic invention. A tool to interact with the world and so are other terms to designate. Concepts are product of the operation of the mind and not product of substance. The object cannot produce a concept.



George Berkeley (1685 – 1753)

In contrast to John Locke, George Berkeley says there is no material substance because we cannot perceive it. For Berkeley, what we think are material entities are ideas in the mind. Material objects are just ideas in the mind. Precisely, because their existence depends on their being perceived by the mind. In other words, Berkeley denies the reality of matter and maintain that everything in this world is an idea in the mind.

For Berkeley, *ESSE EST PERCIPPI*, that is, to be is to be perceived. Berkeley is an empiricist and anything that cannot be perceived cannot exist. Even if an object is not being perceived by an individual being, it does not imply that the object ceases to exist because there is a universal mind that perceive all objects even when human minds are not perceiving it. Berkeley uses this argument for the existence of God.

Berkeley reject Locke's theory of material substance which according to Locke is unknown to us but underlies and sustain the qualities that we perceive. Berkeley agrees with Locke that all that we perceive are qualities such as color sound, taste, solidity, odor and so on. But unlike Locke, Berkeley sees no need to postulate that there must be a substratum (a substance) underlying these qualities. Both Locke and Berkeley thus agree that all our knowledge is about ideas, but they differ because while Locke maintained that ideas are copies or representation of substance in our mind, Berkeley maintained that ideas are things themselves. The supposition that substance is distinct from ideas says Berkeley, is false and if accepted would lead to a universal skepticism. He argues that if we make a distinction between ideas and things since we can only know ideas, all our knowledge is confined to idea we can never know what things really are.

2.5. Conclusion

There are different ideas about the nature of substance by different philosophers. Some deny its existence; some affirm it while others argue that it cannot be perceived. Thus, there is still an intellectual debate, creating an impasse among philosophers as regard the existence and nature of substance.

2.6. Summary

The problem of substance was variously discussed in philosophy. Different philosophers such as Gottfried Leibniz, John Locke, etc., uphold unique but opposing views as regard the nature and qualities of substance. It became necessary because the early philosophers were engrossed with the identifying the nature of things in the universe.

2.7. Self-Assessment Exercise

1. How did Aristotle describe substance?
2. In what way(s) did Leibniz conceive of substance?
3. Define Substance according to John Locke?

2.8. Answer to Self-Assessment Exercise

1. Aristotle says that substance is different from accident. Substance to him has two meanings. It is that which exists on its own while accident is whatever cannot exist on its own but can only inhere other things. It is the specific nature of a thing.
2. Leibniz postulates that substance is the most basic constituent in all things; He calls this basic element Monads. So, all substances consist of monads.
3. Substance is the summation of primary and secondary qualities.

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"Locke & Berkeley" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R9GuSA9HHgA>

“What is SUBSTANCE THEORY? What does SUBSTANCE THEORY mean? SUBSTANCE THEORY meaning & explanation” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P3vHOdIUISQ>

UNIT 2: PROBLEM OF EXISTENCE AND ESSENCE

Contents

2.0. Introduction

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2.3. What is the problem of Existence and Essence?

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2.5. Conclusion

2.6. Summary

2.7. Self-Assessment Exercise

2.8. Answer to Self-Assessment Exercise

References/Further Readings

2.0. Introduction

The problem of existence and essence can be predicated to ancient Greek philosophy and can be found in contemporary time in the works of existentialist philosophers. It was discussed in relation to human freedom, essence and existence. The problem of existence and essence revolves around the question of what is the essence of existence? Does essence precede existence or otherwise? In other words, what is the underlying element for existence. For some philosophers, essence precedes existence, while some philosophers argue otherwise.

2.1. Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

By the end of this unit you would be able to:

- Explain the problem of Existence and Essence
- Identify the philosophers who discussed the problem
- Understand the view of existentialist philosophers on the problem of existence and essence

2.2. Main Content

2.3. What is the problem of Existence and Essence?

The relationship between essence and existence poses a problem that was much debated and controverted in the thirteenth century and continues to be integral in the development of scholastic metaphysics and philosophy as a whole. The historical trajectory of the impasse over essence and existence can be rooted in Greek philosophy, although the problem of the precise

relationship between the two concepts was never explicitly stated there with the clarity to be found in its later formulations. Traditional Western philosophy gives primacy to essence over existence. The essence of a thing is the invariable or inward nature of that thing or its significant feature or features. It is that which characterizes the thing. It can also be described as the attributes of that thing. It is that thing that makes a thing different from all other things. For example, when we talk about the essence of God, we are talking about the attributes of God such as Omnipotence, Omniscience and Omnibenevolent. It is possible to think about the essence of a thing even if it does not exist.

For Plato, the problem could not exist, for he conceived essence as the perfect and stable object of the intellect, devoid of the imperfections and changing character of the world of sense. For Plato, essence alone exists in the strict sense, and this in the world of form. Everything else that is perceived by the senses is merely an illusion or copies of forms and the occasion for referring back to the world of separated substances or essences.

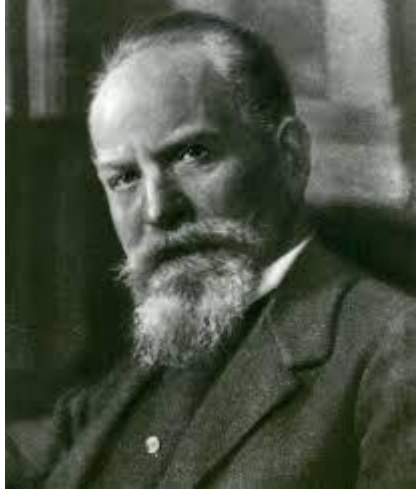
Aristotle reject Plato's view. The rejection by Aristotle made it imperative for him to show the distinction between essence and existence, if not to affirm it outright. In his view, essences do not exist in a separated universe but are to be found in the sensible beings of this world, where they have a concrete and singular mode of existence. The essence of a chair exists in this individual chair, with the accretion of its particular qualities and of all other accidental determinations that make it to be this singular existent thing. There seems little doubt that, for Aristotle, essence and existence are distinct concepts. Whether his distinction is real or merely rational, however, is disputed. It may be that he affirms only that the singular essence man experiences are in a state of actual existence, and that this serves to differentiate it from the purely possible essence that man's mind may happen to conceive.

Among the existentialists, and unlike Western Philosophy, existence preceded essence.



Jean-Paul Sartre (1905 – 1980)

Jean Paul Sartre is one of the existentialist philosophers who hold such a view. To make a claim that existence precedes essence is to say that there is no such predetermined essence to be found in humans, and that an individual's essence is defined by the individual through how that individual creates and lives his or her life. Sartre states in his popular book titled "Existentialism is a Humanism" that man first of all exists, encounters himself, surges up in the world – and defines himself afterwards". Sartre was trying to deny any view that holds that man is not free but that his essence has been fixed by God. To him human freedom assumes that man first of all exists and then decides his essence by deciding what he wants to become.



Edmund Husserl (1859 - 1938)

Edmund Husserl the principal founder of phenomenology, in his discourse on phenomenology argues that phenomenology which is the science of essences is concerned only with the essences of things and not with their actual existence. He calls his phenomenology “eidetic science”. From the point of view of phenomenology, whether a thing exist is not so important as long as the essence can be thought of. However, the idea that essence precedes existence can be criticized based on the fact that it may not be possible to think of the essence of a thing before it exists. A thing has essence because it exists.



For John Dun Scotus (1265/66 – 1308)

Scotus, a philosopher theologian, who thought in perspectives that were somewhat Platonic, essence is existence. Thus, concrete essence is its own existence. Divine Being is the infinite

essence in which all created essences participate; and created essences are real and really existing when God, from the state of simple possibility, puts them into the state of existence.

Thus, there is no real distinction between existing essence and its act of being (*esse*); existence is only a mode of essence, a degree, an intensity, through which essence has become real. This mode is intrinsic to essence and puts it outside its causes. Existence is no longer the supreme value; it is a modality. Essence overtakes it and leads to a philosophy of essences in which existence plays only an accidental role. Scotus maintained, however, a modal distinction *ex natura rei* between essence and existence.

2.4. Conclusion

The problem of existence and essence was mainly discussed by existentialist philosophers. Given the very nature of philosophy itself, the problem of existence and essence is a controversial problem among philosophers in which the best answers provided for this problem has only in turn created more philosophical problems.

2.5. Summary

The concern on the primacy of existence and essence of a thing is one of the problems of philosophy. It was mainly discussed by Existentialist philosophers against the background of human freedom. Different philosophers have upload different views and opinions with each view and opinion enjoying similar epistemic merit, thus, there is a need for further research into the debate.

2.6. Self-Assessment Exercise

1. What is essence in Philosophy?
2. Mention two Philosophers that discussed the problem of existence and essence.
3. What does existence precedes connote?

2.7. Answer to Self-Assessment Exercise

1. The essence of a thing is the invariable or inward nature of that thing or its significant feature or features. It is that which characterizes the thing.
2. The two philosophers that discussed the problem of existence and essence are Jean Paul Sartre and Edmund Husserl
3. To make a claim that existence precedes essence is to say that there is no such predetermined essence to be found in humans, and that an individual's essence is defined by the individual through how that individual creates and lives his or her life.

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UNIT 3: UNIVERSALS AND PARTICULARS

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2.0. Introduction

The problem of universals and particulars also known as the problem of universals is one of the ancient but persisting problems in philosophy. In other words, the problem of universals has been there since the ancient period and generated a dilemma of how to differentiate universals from particular or individual things/entities/objects. What are universals? What are particulars? Are there any relationships between universals and particulars? These are some of the questions under the problem of universals and are meant to serve as guide in investigating this problem during the course of this module.

2.1. Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

By the end of this unit you would be able to:

- Explain the problem of universals and particulars
- Identify the philosophers who discussed the problem
- Give attempted solutions to the problem

2.2. Main Content

2.3. What is the Problem of Universals and Particulars?

The philosophical problem of universals' and universals is a primeval one which continues to create intellectual debate in the modern-day. The problem concerns the ontological status of properties and relations. In probing this problem, we need to address a fundamental question about the existence of universals as mind independent entities and what is their nature? In order to examine this problem, we need to be clear about the distinction between particulars and universals.

Particulars are individual entities such as a specific chair or a specific table. Particulars are entities that we can point to, or that can be observed or perceived by at least one of the sensory organs. Particulars can exist over time, but they can only be in one place at a time, they are 'non-repeatable' entities. Particulars also stand in relation to other particulars, for example one specific table is older than another table.

Universals, if they exist as entities, may be conceived as mind-independent entities. For Plato, they are immaterial 'Forms' which are transcendent, they exist in an abstract realm and can only be known by reason. For some scholars, universals are features of the world that are instantiated by particulars. For Aristotle, they are in the world, they reside in individual items. At the heart of Aristotle's criticism of Plato's Theory of Forms is the idea that universals are not separate from particulars. Aristotle refutes this separation of universals from particulars in two simple ways: first, he argues that Forms cannot constitute a substance; and, secondly, that since Forms are not substances, Forms cannot cause a substance's coming into being. While Platonists hold that Forms are detached, non-physical entities that underlie—and cause—physical things, Aristotle is quick to point out the impossibility of such a claim: "It would seem impossible for a substance to be separate from what it is the substance of. How, then, if the Forms are the substances of things, could they be separate from them?" How is it, Aristotle is asking, that a non-substance (the Forms) can affect the qualities of a substance (the object of a Form)? There are therefore a number of opposing views which attempt to solve the problem of universals. By no means all philosophers believe that universals do in fact exist as distinguishable entities, for them the world is made up only of particulars.

2.3.1. The Dilemma

History made us to understand that even the contemporaries of Socrates could not provide Socrates with the definition of “justice” which is a universal concept. When he asked them to define justice, they provided him with the examples of justice and Socrates told them that he was not asking them to give instances of justice but to provide him with the definition of justice. It is impossible to define justice by giving instances of justice. The same applies to all universal concepts like beauty, humanity, whiteness, goodness, etc.

Justice, beauty, whiteness cannot be defined by giving instances. For instance, the question what is beauty cannot be addressed by pointing at beautiful flowers, beautiful animals’ beautiful houses. Before we can make reference to beautiful things, we must have an idea of beauty which is a universal concept. It is also because we have the idea of justice that is why we can make references to just acts. It is equally the case that our idea of whiteness makes us to be able to identify white in things when we see them.

However, beauty is not the same as beautiful things, whiteness is not the same as white things, and justice is not the same as just act. Therefore, beauty, justice, whiteness are universal things because they are not just ideas in the mind; they are realities. We identify them in things that exhibit them. Particulars things are constantly changing and they fade away. For example, white cloth, white paints will fade with time but whiteness remains the same because it is a universal concept. Beautiful things lose its beauty but beauty remains the same. We identify beauty in many beautiful things

The problem of universals and particulars became so acute in the middle age leading to question like the following: Does universals exist? If they exist where and how do they exist? Do they exist independently?

The medieval philosophers differ in their position as to the ontological status of universals and particulars. Some (Ultra realism or exaggerated realism) held that universals were real entities existing somewhere apart from the objects that manifest them. That is, universals are distinct or separate from their particulars. Advocates of Ultra realism or exaggerated realism include John



William of Champeaux (1070 – 1122)

Scotus (1265/66 – 1308), Remigius of Auxerre (841 – 908), and

, **Duns**



St. Anselmo d'Aosta of Canterbury (1033 – 1109)

On the other hand, Moderate realism, an antithesis of extreme realism, is the view that individual entities exist but not as independent entities separate from individual objects. Advocates

or proponents of this school of thought include, Anicius Manlius Severinus Boëthius **Anicius**



Manlius Severinus Boëthius (480 – 524)

He is commonly called Boethius

And



John of Salisbury (1115/20 – 1180),



Peter Abelard (1079 – 1142)



St Thomas Aquinas (1225 – 1274),

and



Gilbert de la Porre (1076 – 1154).

2.4. Conclusion

Universals and Particulars are concepts that have generated lots of philosophical debates among philosophers. The problem of universals and particulars became so acute in the middle age leading to question like the following: Does universals exist? If they exist where and how do they exist? Do they exist independently? Other philosophers known as Nominalists held the view that universals are not realities and that they are just names used in designating things with certain similarities.

2.5. Summary

The problem of universals and particulars is one of the lingering problems in philosophy. It is a persisting problem that has been confronted both by ancient and contemporary philosophers. It is a problem of how to differentiate universal things from particulars. Are universals, universals or particulars in itself? Are particulars, particulars or universals in itself?

2.6. Self-Assessment Exercise

1. What is the Medieval Philosophers' view of universals and particulars??

2.7. Answer to Self-Assessment Exercise

1. The medieval philosophers differ in their position as to the ontological status of universals.

Some (Ultra realism or exaggerated realism) held that universals were real entities existing somewhere apart from the objects that manifest them

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“Universals and Particulars (Metaphysical Distinction)”
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XNz110GE-FM>

“What is Problem of universals? Explain Problem of universals, Define Problem of universals”
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BeSl0FfTDrw>

MODULE 3

UNIT 1: CAUSE AND EFFECT

UNIT 2: THE PROBLEM OF APPEARANCE AND REALITY

UNIT 3: PROBLEM OF THE EXISTENCE GOD

UNIT 1: CAUSE AND EFFECT

Contents

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3.3.What is the problem of cause and effect?

3.4.Conclusion

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3.6.Self-Assessment Exercise

3.7.Answer to Self-Assessment Exercise

References/Further Readings

3.0. Introduction

What is a cause? Discussion about the problem of causality in philosophy is about that which brings about a certain effect. Causes are linked to effects. Causality is one of the central notions in our views of the world.

3.1. Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

By the end of this unit you would be able to:

- Explain the problem of cause and effect
- Identify the philosophers who discussed the problem

3.2. Main Content

3.3. What is the Problem of Cause and Effect?

We think of the things and events we experience as connected, and causal relations between them is perhaps the most important connection. Thoughts of causation are central to how we think about our own actions, thoughts, and responsibilities and relationships. Aristotle discussed four types of causes namely, (1) material cause, (2) formal cause, (3) efficient cause, (4) final cause.

What produce an effect, reason or motive for action could be said to be the cause, the change produced by an action or cause, impression, state of being operative is the effect. A cause is that by which something an effect is produced. Causality is the internal connection between phenomenon in which whenever one occurs the other must necessarily follow. For example, we have observed that whenever an event occurs an effect will follow. Steam follows when we heat water. Indeterminists philosophers do not agree with the principle of causality. Determinists on the contrary hold that all phenomena are causally conditioned. Cause and effect can be interpreted in various ways. The first is about temporal precedence before and after. For example, if I strike a match to lighten a gas stove fire will occur. However, many events do not precede each other. My going to work does not precede my going to the market.

Two conditions are necessary for the occurrence of an event; these are the necessary and sufficient condition. The necessary condition is one without which the thing would not exist or occur, but this may not be sufficient enough to bring about the occurrence of an event. The sufficient condition is the overall condition required for an event to occur, for example, a condition 'A' for an occurrence of an event 'B' is an event the occurrence of which will justify the prediction of 'B'. A necessary condition 'T' is an event whose absent would be reasonable for the non- occurrence of 'B'.

Causation can be said to be universal because it is assumed that nothing ever happens without a cause. The universe appears to be a well-ordered house where everything runs exactly to plan and up to time. David Hume is of the opinion that the idea of causality arises in our minds when we experience certain relations between objects. He disagrees with the traditional way of understanding the causal maxim. He claims that the observation of constant conjunction of phenomenon is what leads us to infer from cause to effect. David Hume is of the opinion that repetition produces the idea of necessary connection in minds that originally lack it. Going by the theory of ideas, it means that something else must be produced in the mind, and that thing is an impression from which the idea is derived. That impression is not an impression of sensation. Hence, it must be an impression of reflection or an internal impression of the mind.

David Hume argues that the idea of necessary connection comes into the mind only as a result of one mental occurrence causing another, and that we have the idea of necessity only because of the occurrence of certain features. David Hume's argument here is invalid because logical connection is not equivalent to causality, and it is obvious is not as helpless as David Hume made us to believe.

Conclusion

The problem of cause and effect is a problem of what is the connection between event A and event B. A cause is generally assumed to precede its effect but, in some cases, there are no necessary connection between a cause and its effect.

Summary

A cause is that by which something an effect is produced. Two conditions are necessary for the occurrence of an event; these are the necessary and sufficient condition. David Hume argues that the idea of necessary connection comes into the mind only as a result of one mental occurrence causing another, and that we have the idea of necessity only because of the occurrence of certain features.

Self-Assessment Exercise

1. Mention Aristotle's four types of causes

Answer to Self-Assessment Exercises

1. Aristotle's four types of causes are (1) material cause, (2) formal cause, (3) efficient cause, (4) final cause.

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UNIT 2: APPEARANCE AND REALITY

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3.1. Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

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- 3.3. What is the problem of appearance and reality?
- 3.4. Conclusion
- 3.5. Summary
- 3.6. Self-Assessment Exercise
- 3.7. Answer to Self-Assessment Exercise

References/Further Readings

3.0. Introduction

In, *The Problems of Philosophy* Bertrand Russell discussed the distinction between appearance and reality at a great length. According to Bertrand Russell, “In daily life, we assume as certain many things which, on a closer scrutiny, are found to be so full of apparent contradictions that only a great amount of thought enables us to know what it is that we really may believe. In the search for certainty, it is natural to begin with our present experiences, and in some sense, no doubt, knowledge is to be derived from them. But any statement as to what it is that our immediate experiences make us know is very likely to be wrong” (Russell: 2013,p.1).

To Russell, the problem of appearance and reality is one of the distinctions that cause most trouble in philosophy. The distinction was discussed by many philosophers, and some of them, particularly Russell, have employed it in curious ways to support odd and seemingly paradoxical claims.

3.1. Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

By the end of this unit you would be able to:

- explain the problem of appearance and reality
- Identify the philosophers who discussed the problem
- Give examples to illustrate the problem
- Give attempted solutions to the problem

3.2. Main Content

3.3. What is the Problem of Appearance and Reality?

It would not be an exaggerated fact to say that the distinction between appearance and reality is, and has always been, one of the principal focal points of philosophy. Although the question relates to intricate relationships among theories of knowledge, ontology, and truth but the chief question

raised by the distinction is epistemological. Epistemological in that it asks how people know the nature of reality when all that people, have immediate access to are appearances? By appearances we mean those things that the senses such as sight, touch, smell, hearing, and taste can provide.

There are three ways we can respond to how people know reality when indeed we have immediate access to perception. First, there are those that argue that observers are unavoidably “cut off” from reality; second, there are those that argue that there is some way of “getting at” reality through the appearances, and third, there are those that reject the distinction.

In our everyday experience, people find themselves in situations where they are presented with appearances known to be misleading because on deeper investigation such appearances are not real. For example to Russell, “It seems to me that I am now sitting in a chair, at a table of a certain shape, on which I see sheets of paper with writing or print. By turning my head I see out of the window buildings and clouds and the sun. I believe that the sun is about ninety-three million miles from the earth; that it is a hot globe many times bigger than the earth; that, owing to the earth's rotation, it rises every morning, and will continue to do so for an indefinite time in the future. I believe that, if any other normal person comes into my room, he will see the same chairs and tables and books and papers as I see, and that the table which I see is the same as the table which I feel pressing against my arm. All this seems to be so evident as to be hardly worth stating, except in answer to a man who doubts whether I know anything. Yet all this may be reasonably doubted, and all of it requires much careful discussion before we can be sure that we have stated it in a form that is wholly true”.

In addition Russell further said that: “It is evident from what we have found, that there is no colour which pre-eminently appears to be *the* colour of the table, or even of any one particular part of the table—it appears to be of different colours from different points of view, and there is no reason for regarding some of these as more really its colour than others. And we know that even from a given point of view the colour will seem different by artificial light, or to a colour-blind man, or to a man wearing blue spectacles, while in the dark there will be no colour at all, though to touch and hearing the table will be unchanged. This colour is not something which is inherent in the table, but something depending upon the table and the spectator and the way the light falls on the table. When, in ordinary life, we speak of *the* colour of the table, we only mean the sort of

colour which it will seem to have to a normal spectator from an ordinary point of view under usual conditions of light. But the other colours which appear under other conditions have just as good a right to be considered real; and therefore, to avoid favouritism, we are compelled to deny that, in itself, the table has any one particular colour.

Russell further argued that the same thing applies to the texture, shape and touch.

To Russell:

Thus it becomes evident that the real table, if there is one, is not the same as what we immediately experience by sight or touch or hearing. The real table, if there is one, is not *immediately* known to us at all, but must be an inference from what is immediately known. Hence, two very difficult questions at once arise; namely, (1) Is there a real table at all? (2) If so, what sort of object can it be?

Other examples abound in everyday life. We shall give four of these examples that occur to us in everyday life as presented by Omoregbe (2011: 13).

Example One : The sun appears to move round the earth, rising from the East in the morning and setting in the West in the evening every day. This is appearance. But reality as it is that it is the earth that actually revolves around the Sun and not the other way around.

Example Two: This example has to do with our experience on the highway. When we travel on the highway on a sunny day there appears to be a pool of water ahead of us. This is appearance in that as soon as we move closer, we discover that there is no pool of water ahead. This is the reality.

Example Three: The shape of the earth also can be used as an example that illustrates the problem of appearance and reality. For centuries it was believed that the earth is flat. Later it was discovered that the earth is not flat but spherical in shape. This is the reality of the shape of the earth as opposed to the appearance.

Example four: The fourth example can be gotten from a simple experiment of dipping a stick into a river. It will appear bent, whereas it is straight. Other examples abound as to how things appear to us in a way whereas the reality is different. Some instances of these examples are dramatic.

Can we then say that appearances are not real because they deceive us? Can we then conclude that our senses sometimes deceive us? George Berkeley an Irish Bishop believed that it was a mistake to distinguish appearances from reality in the first place. Like his predecessor John Locke, Berkeley puts the discussion in terms of “ideas,” where these include both the appearances one encounters in sensory perception, as well as the mental entities involved in one’s thoughts. Berkeley’s fundamental claim was developed in his two books namely *A Treatise Concerning the Principle of Human Knowledge* and in his *Three Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous*. He claimed that all that exists are minds and the ideas they have. Skepticism which is the idea or attitude of doubting what we know and the reliability of what we know about the external world arose from a wholly unwarranted positing of material substance, understood as something distinct from ideas and minds, which is somehow represented by ideas.

George Berkeley argued it was an unwarranted break with common sense for philosophers to assume the existence of material substance, and in so doing to create the distinction between appearance and reality.

This led another set of philosophers called the rationalist philosophers to argue and conclude that reason alone can give us knowledge and not our senses. This is because unlike the senses which sometimes deceive us, reason does not. Such rationalist philosophers include: Plato, Parmenides, and Descartes. So, in acquiring knowledge, the senses cannot tell us what is known which knowledge is. If the senses cannot tell us what exist which is ontology, neither can it tell us what is the truth.

3.4. Conclusion

In everyday life some things appear to us as real and later we discover that they are not real. This is the problem of appearances and reality. Philosophers that discussed this problem are: George Berkeley, Plato, Parmenides, Descartes and so on. If we are reality is not as they appear to us, then can we ever say that things are real?

3.5. Summary

In this unit we have been able to understand the problem of appearance and reality. Things appear to us as reality and we later discover that they are not real. The fact that we can be deceived by our senses does not mean things are not real. We may be having perceptual error.

3.6. Self-Assessment Exercise

1. Give a practical example of how the appearance of things can be different from reality.

3.7. Answer to Self-Assessment Exercise

1. When we travel on the highway on a sunny day there appears to be a pool of water ahead of us. This is appearance in that as soon as we move closer, we discover that there is no pool of water ahead.

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Watch [Our Knowledge of the World](https://youtu.be/xBt-DN7T6C8?t=40): Is the world we perceive with our senses really representative of the reality beneath appearance? Episode 1 of #Appearance Vs Reality looks at Bertrand Russell <https://youtu.be/xBt-DN7T6C8?t=40>.

UNIT 3: PROBLEM OF EXISTENCE OF GOD

Contents

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3.0 Introduction

The problem of the existence of God centers around the question whether God exists or not and if he does how can we prove his existence. It is often asked if there are good reasons for the belief in the existence of God. If so, what are these reasons? There are three ways the existence of can be answered. Theists argue for the belief in God existence while atheists reject the belief in the existence of God. A belief in the former is theism while the latter is atheism. On the other hand, agnostics argued that we do not have good reasons to either affirm or deny the existence of God and must therefore suspend judgment at least for now. This belief or position is called agnosticism.

Philosophers from Plato till contemporary times try to answer the question of the existence of God with arguments. These arguments can be presented historically presented or classified into three major traditional arguments namely: The Ontological argument, Teleological argument, Cosmological argument. Other arguments are: argument from religious experience and moral argument. The ontological argument is the only one that tries to prove the existence of God from reason or by analyzing his existence. Others argue from the point of experience.

3.1. Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

By the end of this unit you would be able to:

- Understand the problem of the existence of God
- Identify the philosophers who discussed the problem
- Give three basic arguments concerning the existence of God

- Criticise the major arguments on the existence of God

3.2. Main Content

3.3. Arguments on the Existence of God

Some philosophers that discussed the existence of God are: Plato, Aristotle, St Augustine, St Anselm, St Bonaventure, Duns Scotus, William of Ockham, Rene Descartes Gottfried Leibniz, Benedict Spinoza, William Paley, David Hume, and Immanuel Kant. We shall look at the arguments concerning the existence of God one after the other.

3.3.1. Ontological Argument

The first argument concerning the existence of God is called the ontological argument argues that God is a being than which no greater can be conceived. We have an idea of such a being. Existence is necessary to the concept of such a being. If he did not exist, he would not be as great as if he did exist and by definition, he is the greatest being that can be conceived. Therefore, such a being exist.

St Anselm is a major proponent of this argument in fact he invented the argument. Rene Descartes is also one of the philosophers that argued for the existence of God from the ontological view point. He argued from the perspective of that perfection of God. He argues that God is an absolutely perfect being, and that means that God possesses all perfections. Existence to Descartes is a perfection and God is a being that possess all perfection, then it follows that he possesses existence therefore he exists.

This argument is criticized on the basic of the argument that we cannot define anything into existence. Even if we are able to define a thing it does not follow that it exists. For example, you can define “a perfect man”, “a perfect University” “a perfect mountain” but that does not mean that such a university or man or mountain exists. We can go further and raise a counter objection that God in this case is the greatest conceivable being so existence is necessary for his perfection. A second criticism against the ontological argument states that existence is not a property of a thing. The thought of the existence of a being of which nothing greater can be conceived does not prove beyond that.

3.3.2. The Cosmological argument

The cosmological argument derives its strength from the experience of the universe and the fact that the universe or cosmos exists. In the universe everything has a cause. If everything has a cause then the universe itself must have a cause. That cause must be God. Therefore, God exist.

This argument can be criticised by asking what caused God? We may reply that God does not have a cause but this then contradicts our initial argument that everything must have a cause. What is the meaning of cause? The term cause can be interpreted in various ways.

3.3.3. The Teleological Argument

The teleological argument is the third major argument on the existence of God. The argument derives its strength from the design of the universe. The word Teleological is from Teleology from the Greek word “telos” meaning “an end”. The arguments states that there is order or design in the world and this order can be attributed to a supreme intelligence or designer. That person must be God. It is assumed that order or design cannot come by chance or accident. We notice an array of things well designed in the universe. The sun, moon, stars, human beings, night and day all point to an order in the universe. All these point to a designer who designed the world. That person must be God.

This argument is not without its own criticism in that order as the case may be depends on the way we look at things. Order can be relative. If we look at things in a way there may be order but in another way it may not be relative. The existence of evil is another criticism of the teleological argument. If there is order in the world, is evil part of the order? Evil to a critic disrupts order.

3.3.4 The Argument from Miracles

The argument from miracles is also another argument that tries to prove the existence of God from religious experience. The argument states that the occurrence of miracles proves that God exists. Other religious experiences such as mysticism are also given are good grounds to prove the existence of God.

3.3.5. The Moral Argument

The last argument we shall look at is the moral argument. The argument states that life cannot end it all. There must be a transient being that will reward good acts and punish bad ones. This transient being is God. This argument has its own strength in that if life ends it all, then human beings may decide at all times to be immoral. This argument prepares the way for a belief in immortality and life after death.

3.4. Conclusion

The proof of the existence of God generally cannot be established or because it is in the realm of metaphysics. It is a matter of believe. Arguments about the existence of God assume that only reason and experience can give us the knowledge required. There are other sources of knowledge such as revelation. Therefore, philosophical arguments may not suffice to prove or disprove the existence of God.

3.5. Summary

In this unit the main points are: there are three traditional arguments namely the ontological argument, teleological argument and cosmological arguments. Other arguments are the argument from religious experience and moral argument. All the arguments are from experience except the ontological argument which is from reason. The existence of God cannot be proven by philosophical arguments alone. The argument for the existence of God is metaphysical in nature

3.6. Self-Assessment Exercise

1. What is the basis of the Teleological Argument?
2. Can the existence of God be proven by experience alone?
3. Mention the argument from reason that tries to prove the existence of God. Who propounded the argument?

3.7. Answer to Self-Assessment Exercise

1. The teleological argument derives its strength from the design of the universe.
2. The argument for the existence of God cannot be proven from experience alone. It can be proven from reason and religious experience such as revelation or faith.

3. The ontological argument is from reason and it tries to prove that existence of God. St Anselm first propounded the ontological argument.

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MODULE 4

UNIT 1: THE MIND/ BODY PROBLEM

UNIT 2: FREEWILL AND DETERMINISM

UNIT 3: THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

UNIT 1: THE MIND/BODY PROBLEM

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- 4.4. Conclusion
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- 4.6. Self-Assessment Exercise
- 4.7. Answer to Self-Assessment Exercise
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4.0. Introduction

The Mind/Body problem is also a major philosophical problem that dates back to ancient philosophy. It is also a problem that is discussed in one of the core areas of philosophy called Philosophy of Mind. The problem concerns itself with the relationship between the mind and the body. Simply put, what is the relationship (if any) between the mind and the body, mental and physical?

4.1. Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

By the end of this unit you would be able to:

- Explain the mind/body problem
- Identify the philosophers who discussed the problem
- Give examples to illustrate the problem
- Give attempted solutions to the problem

4.2. Main Content

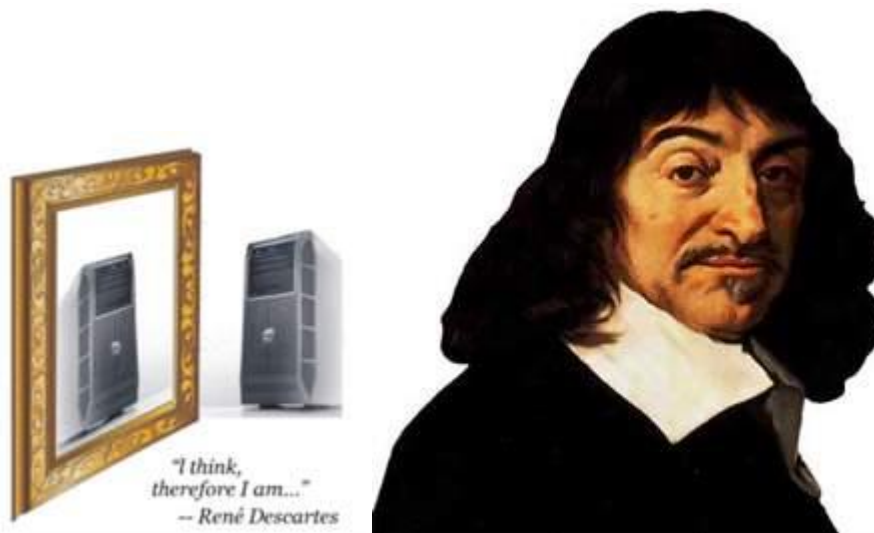
4.3. Mind-Body Problem Defined

The human person is assumed to be composed of a physical part called the body and the mental called mind. The body is physical, tangible, and can be perceived whereas the mind is considered as intangible. The mind/ body problem discusses the relationship between the body a physical thing and the mind a mental thing. It is assumed that physical things are governed by physical laws whereas mental things are governed by mental laws. What then is the relationship between the mind and the body since they operate on different terrains and under different laws.

There are different answers or theories to the mind body problem. Such as, Interactionism, Parallelism, Occasionalism, Epiphenomenalism, The double aspect theory, amongst others.

4.3.1. Interactionism

Interactionism states that the two, body and mind interact with each other. The proponent of this theory is Rene Descartes. For Descartes, the mind and the body causally interact. Mind can cause mental and physical events and the body can cause physical and mental events. When asked where this interaction takes place, Descartes said that the mind and body interact in the pineal gland which is the brain. But is the pineal gland not part of the body? Descartes did not solve the problem. He only pushed it forward. Descartes was the philosopher who actually started their problem of mind and body. He tried to solve the problem with his view of interactionism. Another name for interactionism is Cartesian Interactionism.



4.3.2. Parallelism

Parallelism states that the two are different parallel events and they do not interact. This explanation of the relationship of the mind and body can be attributed to Spinoza. A philosopher. He does not see a problem in the mind and body because they are not two separate entities but as two aspects of the same substance and the source of the substance is God or nature. It is not a matter of one influencing the other but a matter of two parallel things corresponding to each other. In other words, physical events can only cause physical events while mental events can only cause mental events. That is, the mind can only mental events and the body can only cause physical events.

4.3.3. Occasionalism

Geulinx and Malebranche two philosophers after Descartes states that the body and mind are like two clocks each one working according to mechanism. God the creator created each one and he made them to appear as if they act on each other. Occasionalism, there is an occasional interaction between the mind and the body, mental and physical events

4.3.4. Epiphenomenalism

Epiphenomenalism says that the mind is nothing but an epiphenomenon of the body. It is like a smoke to a car. It is like a shadow to a person. The movement of the person causes a shadow and not vice-versa. In other words, physical events have the power to cause mental events. However, mental events do not have the power to cause physical event. In other words, the relationship between the mind and the body according to epiphenomenalism is a one-way relationship. Physical events or the body causing/producing mental events or the mind. That is, if P is physical event and M is mental event, the relationship is as thus; $P \rightarrow M$

4.3.5. The Double Aspect Theory

The double aspect theory says that the mind and body are mere aspects of the same person. One is physical and the other mental. They are like two sides of a coin or two aspects of the same thing.

4.4. Conclusion

The mind/body problem unlike other philosophical problems still remains unresolved till today. It is a problem of what is the relationship between the mind and the body. This problem however has

generated different attempts by philosophers to proffer an answer to the problem through theory formation such as Interactionism, Parallelism, Occasionalism, Epiphenomenalism, The double aspect theory, Behaviorism, Computational-Functionalism, amongst others.

4.5. Summary

The problem of Mind-Body in philosophy is about how the body a physical thing relates to the mind a spiritual thing since they are governed by different laws. We highlighted five different solutions/theories to the problem namely: Interactionism, Occasionalism, Parallelism, Epiphenomenalism, The Double aspect Theory. However, the problem is still unresolved till today.

4.6. Self- Assessment Exercise

1. Briefly state the mind-body Problem.
2. Who started the mind-body Problem?
3. Mention three attempted solutions to the problem?

4.7. Answer to Self-Assessment Exercise

1. The mind/ body problem discusses the relationship between the body a physical thing and the mind a mental thing. It is assumed that physical things are governed by physical laws whereas mental things are governed by mental laws. What then is the relationship between the mind and the body since they operate on different terrains and under different laws.
2. Descartes started the mind/body problem
3. Occasionalism, Double aspect theory, Parallelism

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MODULE 4

UNIT 2: FREEWILL AND DETERMINISM

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4.0 Introduction

The problem of freewill and determinism is a metaphysical problem in philosophy. It is a problem that concerns itself with whether humans are free or not. Simply put, the problem of freewill and determinism is a problem of human actions are free moral actions and can be held responsible for their actions or if human actions are determined.

4.1. Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

By the end of this unit you would be able to:

- Explain the problem of Freewill and Determinism
- Identify the philosophers who discussed the problem
- State the types of determinism
- Understand soft and hard determinism

4.2. Main Content

4.3. Problem of Freewill and Determinism Defined

The problem of freewill and determinism can be conceived as a philosophical problem that is centered around human existence. This problem concerns itself with questions such as, are humans free? Are human actions determined? Can a moral agent be held morally responsible for his or her actions? These questions would serve as a guide as we problem into the nature of freewill and determinism.

4.3.1. Freedom/Freewill

As human beings, it is generally assumed that we have the ability to decide and conclude on what action(s) we want to perform. We take decisions at different times, under various situations and circumstances. In other words, we assume that we are free to make choices for our actions. This

form the bases for moral responsibilities, rewards and punishment for our actions in that whatever choices we make we are responsible for the consequences. Thus, we are either rewarded for our actions or punished, praised or blamed. By freedom we mean absence of coercion, compulsion, intimidation and freewill to take decisions.

However, freedom becomes a problem when we consider the concept of determinism. What then is determinism? How does it become a problem when viewed viz-a-viz the concept of freewill? Is man truly a free agent in making decisions? Are our choices of actions really choices? This is the problem of freewill or freedom and determinism in philosophy.

4.3.2. Determinism

Discussions on determinism often go hand in hand with freedom and vice-versa. The word determinism in relation to human freedom is not viewed as a resolution or determination to do something or achieve a goal. Rather, it is synonymous with “to be caused”. That is everything that happens has some cause, so determinism is “to be caused”. It is a theory of universal causation. Every event in the language and parlance of determinism has a cause. The cause can be of various things that ranges from the physical to psychological. It can be theological, ethical or historical. Thus, we have physical determinism, psychological determinism, theological determinism, historical determinism and ethical determinism as types of determinism. We shall now look at the various types of determinism in order to understand the concept. These types include ethical determinism, theological determinism, among others

4.3.2.1. Ethical determinism

Ethical determinism states that man is determined by what they perceive as good. In other words, once a person knows what is good, he will be compelled to do it. A man will not know what is good and choose what is evil. If a man chooses what is evil then it is because he perceives it as good. Some philosophers that held this view are so crates, Plato and S.T. Thomas Aquinas.

4.3.2.2. Theological Determinism

Theological determinism can also be described as predestination. It states that all events that happen are pre-ordained by God and/or are predestined by God to happen especially as God is

considered as omniscience and a divine being who has foreknowledge of everything that is going to happen. Other types of determinism include physical determinism, psychological determinism, historical determinism.

I. Physical or Causal Determinism states that man is not free because all events are determined by physical laws. Man is considered to be a part of nature, hence our actions are determined by it.

II. Psychological Determinism states that events in our psychological being such as childhood behaviors, instincts or motive determine our actions.

III. Historical Determinism: Historical determinism holds that events in history determine our actions. The future is then not in the hands of men but as determined by history. This theory may not be easy to accept because man makes history and not vice-versa.

4.4. Freewill and Determinism

If one is indeed free and at the same time determined as discussed above then there is a problem. There is an apparent contradiction. This is the problem of freewill and determinism in philosophy. Freedom is incompatible with determinism. How can one be free at the same time determined or how can ones' action be explained in the face of actions that are assumed to cause the action. There are two types of answer to the problem of freewill and determinism and they are soft and hard determinism depending on the degree of human freedom attached to it or denied by it.

4.4.1. Soft determinism

Soft determinism, otherwise called compatibilism holds that determinism is true, but we still act as free, morally responsible agents when, in the absence of external constraints, our actions are caused by our desires. Once our actions are caused by our freewill then we are morally responsible for them.

4.4.2. Hard Determinism

Hard Determinism is the theory that human behavior and actions are wholly determined by external factors, and therefore humans do not have genuine free will or can they be ethical responsible or accountable for their actions.

4.4.3. Fatalism and Indeterminism

Fatalism is another theory closely related to determinism. It denies that human beings have the power to change the course of events. “What is going to happen will happen”. The fatalist will say: “If you are going to die by road accident you will die by road accident” This view flies in the face of common sense. We try to take precautions in life. For example, we guide against reckless driving. **Indeterminism** is a view that is opposed to determinism. It denies that everything that happens has a cause. Indeterminism uphold that things happen by chance. Thus, the theory of randomness emanated.

4.4. Conclusion

Depending on our view point, it is possible to accept that human beings are to an extent morally responsible for their actions irrespective of the deterministic factors surrounding us. It is not an easy task defending fatalism because in our day to day activities human beings try to make efforts to change situations confronting them.

4.5. Summary

The problem of freewill and determinism is a problem in philosophy. This problem revolves around whether humans are free or determined. In reaction to this problem, many theories have been postulated by philosopher. Theories such as determinism, hard determinism, soft determinism etc.

4.6. Self-Assessment Exercise

1. Mention four types of determinism?
2. What is soft determinism?

4.7. Answers to Self- Assessment Exercise

1. Physical Determinism, Ethical Determinism, Theological Determinism, Psychological Determinism

2. Soft determinism holds that determinism is true, but we still act as free, morally responsible agents when, in the absence of external constraints, our actions are caused by our desires. It allows for a little bit of freedom in spite of the fact that our actions are determined.

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UNIT 3: THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

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4.0. Introduction

The problem of evil like other problems of philosophy generates lots of controversies especially when the question of the existence of God and the attributes is viewed with the realities of the existence of evil. It is a problem of how to reconcile the existence of evil with the existence of an omnipotent, omnibenevolent and omniscient God. It is a problem associated with the theistic concept of God. A God who created the world and has the attributes of Omnipotence, Omniscience, Omnibenevolence and who is Holy and Righteous.

4.1. Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

By the end of this unit you would be able to:

- Explain the problem of evil
- Identify the two types of the problem of evil
- Identify the philosophers who discussed the problem
- Give attempted solutions to the problem

4.2. Main Content

4.3. Problem of Evil Explained?

There are events pointing to the realities of evil in the world. Some of these evil events includes death from accidents, disaster, terminal illnesses, earthquake, loss of loved ones, cruel arising from man to man to mention a few. The above listed events are seen as evil in nature causing pain and agony to people's lives and property. Evil can be defined as the absence of good, something that is painful, injurious, causing unhappiness, calamitous, impedes and disrupts one's goal. It is generally related to things that are unpalatable.

One begins to wonder, why is it that evil exist? This has caused lots of arguments and debates among philosophers and scholars. Should evil which is seen as something painful, nasty, brutal exists where an all knowing and benevolent God exist?

Evil exists in different manners and forms. We have natural evil, moral evil, physical evil, intellectual evil and many among others. Natural evil is believed to be caused by nature itself. Examples of this includes natural disaster such as; earthquake, flood, tsunami, and many others. Moral evil on its own is seen as evil that is been inflicted by man upon man. It is a kind of pain,

agony, suffering that is being caused by individuals on one another. Example of moral evil includes theft, kidnapping, killing, assault, and many others. Then the last one is physical evil. This form of evil is not just felt, it is physical. An example is a cripple from the day of conception. Such a person is limited in terms of achievement, choice of marriage and even career especially when the parents feel he/she cannot become anything. Physical evil is also a form of natural evil.

Going by the above discussion on evil and the various forms of evil, the realities of evil in the world becomes obvious. Then the problem lies on how and why should evil exist in the world that is said to be created by God? Let's take a look at a scenario of a pastor who was inside a bus preaching the word of God, convincing people how benevolent and how powerful God is. On the journey, the bus had an accident; everyone survived the accident except the pastor preaching the gospel of God. What kind of explanation can we give this occurrence? Why is it the case that the one who is trying to convince people into believing in God is now the one being disappointed by God? The truth is, how will people in the bus believe everything the pastor has been saying about God?

Of what relevance then is the attributes of God to handling the pain caused by evil? One of the ironies in this problem is that it could even have been much more explainable if the only people experiencing evil are the wicked people of the world, but be that as it may, the good ones are the majority suffering from pain. There are two forms of the problem of evil. The first form of the problem of evil is known as the logical problem of evil and the second, as evidential problem of evil. The logical problem can be posed in an argument the problem like this:

1st Premise: God Exist

2nd Premise: God is Omnipotent

3rd Premise: God is Omniscient (All knowing, aware of everything on earth)

4th Premise: God is omnipotent (all powerful)

5th Premise: God is Omnibenevolent (that is wholly good. He is holy and absolutely righteous)

6th Premise: Evil exist (Evil is unpalatable)

Conclusion: God does not exist.

In the above premises 1-5 can be true and they are not logically consistent with each other but the 6th Premise is inconsistent with all the other 1-5. If God is all knowing and benevolent as claimed then there should not be evil in the world. If he does not have the power to remove or completely eradicate evil, then that negates His attribute of omnipotent. It may also be the case that he is all powerful and benevolent but he does not even know that there is evil in the world, then that negates his attribute of omniscient. Lastly, it may then be assumed that he is all- knowing and all-powerful but he is not caring and good enough to remove the evil. Why then should we keep calling him a benevolent God? With this we are left with two conclusions, it is either God does not even exist, or the attributes attached to him is exaggerated or not true. All the premises cannot be held without running into a logical contradiction. In other words you cannot hold the two beliefs at the same time.

The evidential form of evil is based on the evidences that evil exist. If it is true that a large amount of evil exists, then God does not exist. Epicurus one of the ancient Philosophers who lived between (342-270 B.C.) said that: “Is God willing to prevent evil, but not able? Then he is not omnipotent. Is he able, but not willing? Then he is malevolent. Is he both able and willing? Then whence evil?” David Hume put the argument in a form of dilemma: “If the evil in the world is from the intention of the Deity, then he is not benevolent. If the evil in the world is contrary to his intention, then he is not omnipotent. But it is either in accordance with his intention or contrary to it. Therefore, either the Deity is not benevolent or he is not omnipotent.” Gottfried Leibniz says that God was expected with all his power, goodness, and knowledge to have chosen the best in creating the world, and so he concludes that whoever does not chose the best course is lacking either in power, or knowledge, or goodness. God did not choose the best course in creating the world, therefore God was lacking in power, or knowledge, or goodness. There are many ways the problem can be stated depending on the angle one is looking at it.

An attempted solution or explanation to the problem of evil is called Theodicy. They are reactions to the problem of evil and they can either be philosophical or religious. A lot of philosophers tried to resolve the contradiction in the existence of evil and the attributes and existence of God. The Stoics a philosophical school founded by Zeno in the third century claimed the universe is governed by rigid laws of nature emanating from God’s creation. It is well ordered and harmonious

and everything plays a useful role. Nothing is useless, nothing happens by chance. We say something is evil because we do not understand how they contribute to the harmonious system. Benedict Spinoza says that evil is an obstruction to the self-fulfillment in human life. Leibniz explains the problem of evil by saying that this is the best possible world that can be created and that evil can become an instrument to perfect the whole of creation. A St Augustine claim that evil is a deprivation of good, or the absence of being, and it is a result of the free will that God has given man.

There are religious theodicies to the problem of evil. Hinduism claims that evil is a form of illusion or *maya* Buddhism says that the exact amount of suffering that each person experiences on earth is determined by *Karma*. They teach that part of man's suffering on earth is continuous rebirth until liberation is achieved. African traditional religion expresses all the six premises stated above. However, the problem of evil takes a new turn with the religion. This is because God in African traditional religion works hand in hand with Orisas (divinities) in his theocratic government and some of them like Esu exhibit evil. The Yoruba for example believe that Evil (Ibi) and Ire (Goodness) co-exist. In some ifa verses both are referred to as (Two things co-existing). The Yoruba often say, *Tibi tire la da ile aiye* (The World was created with evil and good). Evil to the Yoruba will eventually be conquered by good.

4.4. Conclusion

The philosophical problem of evil is not about the existence of evil alone. The existence of evil becomes a philosophical problem when we claim that there is a good God who is all powerful, all-knowing, holy, righteous and a creator of the world yet could not stop evil in the world. The various theodicies have their own problems. Either they are able to explain moral evil but not able to explain natural and physical evil in the world. The philosophical problem of evil exists till today in that we still try to explain the existence of God and his attributes in the face of evil.

4.5. Summary

The Philosophical problem of evil arises from our claim that God exists and he created the universe. He exists as an omnipotent, omniscient, omnibenevolent God. Yet evil which is considered as injurious and painful exist in the world with all the attributes of God. There are

attempted solutions to this problem called Theodicies. They can come as religious answers to the problem of evil or philosophical answers.

4.6. Self-Assessment Exercise

1. What is the Philosophical problem of evil?
2. How many forms of the problems do we have?
3. What is a theodicy?
4. What are the two broad types of theodicies that we have?

4.7. Answer to Self-Assessment Exercise

1. The problem of evil is a problem of how to reconcile the existence of evil with the existence of an omnipotent, omnibenevolent and omniscient God.
2. There are two forms of the problem of evil.
3. An attempted solution or explanation to the problem of evil is called Theodicy.
4. The two broad forms of theodicies are Philosophical and Religious.

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