

COURSE GUIDE

PHL 314 ADVANCED METAPHYSICS

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INTRODUCTION

PHL314: Advanced Metaphysics is a three credit unit course. It is made up of 24 units which present very broad insights into what metaphysics as a major branch of philosophy is interested in. This course studies systems of metaphysics: realism, idealism, nominalism, universalism, etc. Concepts of nature, reality and thought. Problems of Being, God and human nature; substance, freedom and determinism, fatalism, participation, essence and existence, and chance. The relevance of metaphysics to contemporary problems. Major modern and contemporary philosophers. It also studies theories of time; the relationship between time, space and consciousness. The perception of time in various cosmologies (African, Western and Eastern); Time, permanence and change; time, temporality and eternity.

The course is compulsory for obtaining a degree in philosophy. The course guide gives an overview and description of the course content, explicates on why the course is a key requirement in philosophical studies, present relevant course materials and tools with various ways to utilizing these for the purpose of learning and teaching. Practice questions in the form of review questions; that is, presentation schedule with Tutor marked assignments is also added to this course guide for effective learning by students.

COURSE AIM

The major aim of this course is to stimulate and facilitate an exciting learning experience of students for quite an abstract and very often considered dry aspect of philosophy – metaphysics. It not only introduces you to the very broad issues central to metaphysics, it presents some of the nuances of the debates in a systematic manner while demonstrating its connectedness with other aspects of philosophy and of course other disciplines. The course objectives of this effort are aimed at both to familiarise you with the nature, interest and science of metaphysics as well as to make the learning experience exciting at the same time for you. That is;

- i. to enable you have a profound grasp of the main issues and themes relevant to our study of metaphysics at some advanced level.
- ii. to enable you state in clear terms what metaphysics is and what it is not against the backdrop of the many misconceptions of metaphysics.
- iii. to introduce you to how various cultures and societies or more specifically regions view some of the problems and themes in metaphysics.
- iv. to be able to unequivocally show how metaphysics differs and

relates with and relevant to other disciplines as well as the society at large.

In addition to the broad objectives stated above, each unit as part of the larger module frame also has specific objectives. They are stated at the beginning of the unit. You are encouraged to read and study them while they work their way through the entire unit. These objectives help to gauge one's familiarity with the main issues discussed in the units and so you are encouraged to utilize them accordingly. The unit objectives are to:

- i. have an overview of the subject matter and scope of metaphysics.
- ii. able to draw a line of distinction between what is and what is not metaphysics.
- iii. have a bird's eye view of the themes and issues central to the discipline of metaphysics.
- iv. understand how the concept of metaphysics is conceptually and heretically understood.
- v. have a dashboard image of the various important moments in the development/understanding of metaphysics.
- vi. show the various sub-divisions and their concerns/subject matter.
- vii. appreciate the perennial nature of some of the problems of metaphysics.
- viii. understand the contributions of various important philosophers to metaphysics; and
- ix. stimulate metaphysical reflections as attempts to understanding the intractable problems in metaphysics.

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN IN THIS COURSE

The overall aim of PHI 314: Advance Metaphysics is to introduce and deepen students' appreciation of what the focus and interest of metaphysics is all about as an important branch of philosophy. It also discusses the various branches and their subject matter in ways that show the fundamental connection there is between metaphysics and other aspects of philosophy. It hopes to stimulate metaphysical reflection and thinking among students by ensuring there is a profound appreciation of the various attempts to resolve some of the problems in metaphysics over the years as well as make the learning experience very exciting and interesting.

WORKING THROUGH THE COURSE

To complete this course – Advanced Metaphysics, you are required to carefully read the study units, interact with the recommended texts and examine other accessible materials especially those that are online. Each unit contains review or self- assessment exercises. Note that in the course of time it will be required of you to make presentation at both the individual and group levels and make submission of same as well as written essay/assignment which will be assessed and graded as part of your final assessment in this course. At the end of each module, the you will find a set of review questions and list of further readings to assist you to follow through by way of personal or self-study purposes. It is worth explaining that the purpose of the exercises is to help the reader/student engage in critical reading (reflective, a probing, questioning reading), rather than the kind of passive reading in which we often indulge. Though many questions are simply comprehension questions, which require readers/students to check their understanding of the ideas in the text, others require readers/students to produce their own examples, to draw out the implications, to evaluate arguments, and to assess the materials they have read. These questions should be helpful in guiding your thinking and should also provide useful materials for instructors.

STUDY UNITS

This course has 22 study units that are structured into 5 modules. Each module consists of 3-5 study units as indicated below:

Module 1 Metaphysics: Nature, Branches and Other Disciplines

- | | |
|--------|---|
| Unit 1 | Meaning, Conceptual and theoretical definition, branches and nature |
| Unit 2 | General Issues and Problems in Metaphysics |
| Unit 3 | The Futility of Eliminating Metaphysics |
| Unit 4 | The Relevance of Metaphysics |

Module 2 Systems of Metaphysics

- | | |
|--------|---|
| Unit 1 | Realism |
| Unit 2 | Idealism |
| Unit 3 | Nominalism |
| Unit 4 | The Problem of Universals |
| Unit 5 | The Concepts of Nature, Reality and Thought |

Module 3 Problems of Being

Unit 1	Historical Exploration of the Question of Being
Unit 2	The God Question in Metaphysics
Unit 3	A Short Discourse on Human Nature
Unit 4	The Mind-Body Problem (Some Theories/Debates)
Unit 5	Notion of Substance (Monism vs Pluralism)

Module 4 Freewill and Determinism

Unit 1	What is Freewill?
Unit 2	The Nature of Determinism
Unit 3	Determinism in African Metaphysics

Module 5 Further Reflections on Some Other Problems of Metaphysics

Unit 1	Participation
Unit 2	Essence and Existence
Unit 3	Chance/Indeterminacy and Causality
Unit 4	Theories of Time and Space
Unit 5	The Concept of Authenticity

PRESENTATION SCHEDULE

This course has two presentations. There is one at the middle of the semester and the other towards the end of the semester. Before presentations, the facilitator would have taken the time to establish the rudimental of the course to your familiarity. At the beginning of the semester, you will be assigned a topic by the course facilitator, which will be made available in due time, for individual presentations during forum discussions. Each presenter has 15 minutes (10 minutes for presentation and 5 minutes for Question and Answer). On the other hand, students will be divided by the course facilitator into different groups. Each group is expected to come up with a topic to work on and to submit same topic to the facilitator via the recommended medium. All of these add up to the reinforcement of class participation and attendance.

ASSESSMENT

There are two segments on assessment for this course. These are: Tutor-Marked Assignments (TMAs) and a written examination. You are expected to submit your assignments to your tutor as at when due for 30% of your total course mark. Afterward, a final three-hour examination accounts for 70% of your total course work. Together, all of these amount to 100%.

To avoid plagiarism, students should use the followings links to test run their presentation papers before submission to their tutors:

- <http://plagiarism.org>
- <http://www.library.arizona.edu/help/tutorials/plagiarism/index.html>

Similarity index for submitted works by student must **NOT EXCEED 35%**.

HOW TO GET THE MOST OUT OF THIS COURSE

For students to get the most out of this course, s/he must:

- Have 75% of attendance through active participations in both forum discussions and facilitation;
- Read each topic in the course materials before it is being treated in the class;
- Submit every assignment as at when due; as failure to do so will attract a penalty;
- Discuss and share ideas among his/her peers; this will help in understanding the course more;
- Download videos, podcasts and summary of group discussions for personal consumption;
- Attempt each self-assessment exercises in the main course material;
- Take the final exam; and
- Approach the course facilitator when having any challenge with the course.

FACILITATION

This course operates a learner-centered online facilitation. To support the student's learning process, the course facilitator will, one, introduce each topic under discussion; two, open floor for discussion. Each student is expected to read the course materials, as well as other related publications, and raise critical issues which s/he shall bring forth in the forum discussion for further dissection; three, summarizes forum discussion; four, upload materials, videos and podcasts to the forum; and five, disseminate information via email and SMS if need be.

REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS/WEB RESOURCES

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- Onyeocha, I. M. (2009). *Introfil: A First Encounter with Philosophy*, Second Edition. Washington, DC: Council for Research in Values and Philosophy.

Parrat, J. (1977). Time in traditional African thought, *Religion*, 7:2, 117-126.

Rea, M. (2014). *Metaphysics: the Basics*. London & New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis.

Unah, J. I. (1996, reprinted 1998). *Metaphysics, Phenomenology and African Philosophy*. Ibadan: Hope publications.

Unah, J. I. (2010). *Metaphysics*. Lagos: University of Lagos Press.

Van Inwagen, P. (2015). *Metaphysics*, fourth edition. Colorado: Westview Press.

In addition to the afore-stated work, the following online sites can also assist students to acquire additional publications:

- www.pdfdrive.net
- www.bookboon.com
- www.sparknotes.com
- <http://ebookey.org>
- <https://scholar.google.com>
- <https://books.google.com>

MAIN COURSE

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MODULE 1 METAPHYSICS: NATURE, BRANCHES AND OTHER DISCIPLINES

INTRODUCTION

This module is made of four study units. The first study unit focuses on the question: what is metaphysics and what are its branches? The second study unit addresses general issues, highlight problems central in metaphysics and examines the question: is metaphysics relevant? In the first unit, you will learn the meaning and subject matter of metaphysics; that is, various ways we can define and understand metaphysics; conceptually and theoretically and outline the basic subdivisions and the subject matter of each of the subdivisions of metaphysics. In the third, the relevance of metaphysics is discussed as the last considers the futility of eliminating metaphysics by some scholars and some intellectual movements in the history of thought.

UNIT 1 MEANING, CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL DEFINITION, BRANCHES AND NATURE OF METAPHYSICS

Unit structure

- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Intended Learning Outcomes
- 1.3 What is Metaphysics?
 - 1.3.1 The Scope or Sub-Divisions of Metaphysics
 - 1.3.2 General Issues and Problems in Metaphysics
- 1.4 Summary
- 1.5 References/Further Reading/Web Resources
- 1.6 Possible Answers to SAE

1.1 Introduction

This unit presents the meaning, conceptual and theoretical understanding of metaphysics. It also outlines the basic subdivisions of metaphysics while at the same time characterising their subject matters. It does this to give students a very broad context and background to the entire concern of this course. The need for some general background and introductory reflection to refresh our minds on what the nature of metaphysics is to foreground a deeper and better appreciation of the basics and principles of this course - advance metaphysics. To achieve this all important refresher exercise it is important to start by undertaking a kind of stock taking of what is metaphysics and what is not against the backdrop of the frequent misconceptions of this very important branch of

philosophy.

1.2 Intended Learning Outcomes

By the of this unit, you will be able to:

- define and delineate what is metaphysics;
- demonstrate what metaphysics is not;
- explain the various ways of defining a concept in philosophy generally; i.e.theoretically and conceptually; and
- explain the various subdivisions of metaphysics and the subject matterthere of.

1.3 What is Metaphysics?

As a discipline and as a branch of philosophy metaphysics remains a significant aspect of the discipline of philosophy to such an extent that philosophy cannot be said to be worth its name without the study and appreciation of the core parts that make up the discipline of philosophy. These core parts are fundamentally three viz: - metaphysics, epistemology and axiology (ethics). The importance of metaphysics along with epistemology and ethics cannot be overemphasized in one's study of philosophy. Thus, students of philosophy are expected to take courses in these different aspects/branches of philosophy in order to make complete and comprehensive their programme in philosophy.

Before we examine some of the various important themes and theories in metaphysics it is important to clear some misconceptions about metaphysics. In some contexts, metaphysics is wrongly/erroneously conceived to be generally said to be wholly and entirely concerned with the great beyond and secrets of and about the workings of the nature/universe such as the occult operations and mystical powers. Occultism is not metaphysics and Metaphysics is not occultism (Iroegbu 1994: 15).

There are various positive ways of conceiving metaphysics that is worth outlining for our purposes in this course. For example, one of the positive understandings of what the subject matter of this branch of philosophy is concerned with provides a rather broad picture of the focus of metaphysics. In this instance, metaphysics is concerned with the study of being as such or the totality of reality or all that there is. In fact, like other sciences, being is the subject matter of metaphysics. Thus, the nature of being in its deepest aspects, its causes, properties is the focus of metaphysics. Another positive way of looking at metaphysics also is that this branch of philosophy is concerned with the nature of framework with which we approach and seek to understand the world around us. This sort

of Kantian and post-Kantian image of the discipline of metaphysics plays a huge role in the contemporary era of philosophy.

There are two ways to define metaphysics; conceptually or theoretically. The former simply takes on the concept and analyses it. For example, it is a well-known fact of history that the term originates from the Greek expression: *Ta meta ta physica* (after the physics). Andronicus of Rhodes, who edited and collated Aristotle's works in C. 70 B.C. placed the work that Aristotle called First philosophy, after the ones on Physics and termed it After the Physics. Therefore, from the two Greek words that make it up "meta" – after, beyond, transcending and "physics" – physics, body or matter to mean that which concerns itself beyond the physical. Does it then follow that it does not consider things in the physical world at all or in any sense at all? I think not, suffice it to note that it does seek explanations of the nature of things per se in the most general sense and in ways distinct from just being concerned with particular things. We will now attempt to define metaphysics in the second way; theoretically. To define a term theoretically is simply to outline how various experts or professionals in a field define the term. In other words, their various theories of what the term is about. Therefore to define metaphysics theoretically, metaphysics seeks to study reality as such; that is, in its most comprehensive scope and basic principles/properties (Iroegbu 1994: 21-22; Koons & Pickavance 2015). Other theorists and philosophers define it differently thus; for Plato, metaphysics concerns itself with the knowledge of the supra-sensible, for real things are existents in the world of forms/ideal world which of course are explanatory of the transient world. In the view of Descartes, metaphysics focuses on the knowledge of things beyond the sensible world. For Kant, it is the transcendental analysis of the contents of the human mind. In the view of Aquinas, metaphysics is the ultimate explanation of the mystery of being visible and invisible, in the ultimate being (causal and final) which is God. Metaphysics for Martin Heidegger is the ontological inquiry into the "Sein", "being", "to be" of all that there is: why there are essences.

1.3.1 The Scope or Sub-division of Metaphysics

In some texts, metaphysics is traditionally divided into two broad areas; general and special metaphysics. While general metaphysics is often regarded as ontology and sometimes interchangeably used for metaphysics broadly speaking (the science of being as being); special metaphysics is further divided into three areas to include; theodicy or natural theology (here the concern surrounds the nature and problem of God, good and evil in the world, suffering, immortality of the souls, and whether the universe has purpose or end or meaning at all). Other branches are cosmology (centers on the origin, nature, structure and existence of the universe or the cosmos) and rational psychology (focuses on the

problem of mind, nature of the mind-body problem and associated issues of consciousness).

The focus of these various branches outlined above show how comprehensive the scope of metaphysics is. In other words, metaphysics seeks to deal with the nature and totality of reality – what is.

Again, these branches of metaphysics reveal something about the fundamental nature of this particular aspect of philosophy; that is, metaphysics. A quick review of our foregoing discussion on the various branches into which metaphysics traditionally breaks show that a thorough study of metaphysics gives one preliminary insights albeit panoramic insights into other areas of philosophy. One is likely to encounter these various aspects during one's study of the course such as philosophy of mind, philosophy of nature/science amongst others. At this point, it is crucial to say a few things about the nature of metaphysics in relation to other disciplines in a very brief manner.

As our introductory reflections show that metaphysics studies reality in its ultimate sense and context, does it make sense to claim that the concerns of other disciplinary endeavours seem rather superfluous. For example, as we have demonstrated that general metaphysics as ontology studies being, what then is the need for other disciplines such as anthropology, geology, biology and others? Do these other disciplines study nothing? Or study same being? If these disciplines do study being, what is the nature of the differences there are between metaphysics as ontology which studies being as against these other intellectual disciplines that study various aspects of being since they do not study nothing?

One distinguishing factor is the approach or method adopted by these disciplines as against the method adopted/used in metaphysics or philosophy generally. Whereas these sciences, for example, use the empirical method that involves the observation, experimentation, testing, quantification, modeling and analysis to access and warrant their results, metaphysics, on the other hand, uses the meta-empirical approach that involves reflection, logical and argumentative reasoning procedures to engaging its subject matter.

Another point of difference between metaphysics and the other sciences worth noting is the nature of the basic question posed in these disciplines. While questions in these other sciences are formulated along the lines of the 'how' questions, metaphysics proceeds roughly by posing the 'what' and 'why' questions as fundamental to assessing its subject matter. According to Iroegbu (1995: 26-27), in the questioning task, there are two-fold concerns; the formal and the material object of metaphysics. Whereas the former is whatever all realities is, existing beings, all essences. The

latter; that is, the formal object of metaphysics is the act of existence, the 'to be', the being of whatever is, just as the formal object of medicine is health.

1.3.2 General Issues and Problems in Metaphysics

Metaphysics is the science of being, its attributes, its principles and its categories. It is in other words, that part of philosophy that is concerned with the basic issues of reality, existence, personhood, and freedom versus determinism. Aristotle calls it "First Philosophy" because it concentrates on the first or most basic questions we encounter when we study the issues of life. It grapples with such questions as what reality is, whether it is limited to the physical, material world alone, or whether reality could exist in the mind and what difference there is, if any, between reality and appearance. In Aristotle, Metaphysics when called 'First Philosophy', it is used to distinguish it from second philosophy or the theory of nature (Physics). The subject matter of metaphysics therefore is being as being, of its principles and causes and of the divine.

Metaphysics is a philosophical inquiry into the most basic and general features of reality and our place in it. Because of its very subject matter, metaphysics is often philosophy at its most theoretical and abstract. Our simple, intuitive reflections on our familiar experiences of everyday life and the concepts that we use to describe them can lead us directly to some of the most profound and intractable problems of metaphysics.

On the nature of existence, we shall deal with the question of what it is for something to exist and what it is for us to acknowledge something as existing. The problem of identity – we shall try to know whether qualitative indiscernibility entails identity, or whether identity is always necessary or can be contingent, whether identity is relative to mortals. On "modal" concepts like necessity and possibility, essence and essential property, necessary and contingent truth, and "possible worlds." what it is for something to be a "thing," and, in particular, what makes one thing at one time to be "the same thing" as something at another time. This part is followed by a group of writings addressing the same question for persons: there is a clear and deep difference, most of us would feel, between our continuing to live till tomorrow and our being replaced by an exact "molecule-for- molecule" duplicate in our sleep tonight; but in what does this difference consist? We shall also come across the nature of causation, the relation that David Hume famously called "the cement of the universe." Major contemporary accounts of the nature of causation will be presented. In the opening of the paragraph of his introduction to metaphysics, Heidegger articulates his metaphysical question about reality.

Why are there essents rather than nothing? That is the question. Clearly it

is no ordinary question. Why are there essents, why is there anything at all, rather than nothing? Obviously this is the first of all questions, though not in a chronological sense. Individuals and peoples ask a good many questions in the course of their historical passage through time. They examine, explore, and test a good many things before they run into the question “why are there essents rather than nothing”. Many men and women never encounter this question, if by encounter we mean not merely to hear and read about it as an interrogative formulation but to ask the question; that is, to bring it about, to raise it, to feel its inevitability (Martin Heidegger, 1961: 1).

According to Heidegger, the question, why are there essents rather than nothing? Is first in rank among other questions. It is so because it is the most far reaching the deepest and the most fundamental of all questions (Heidegger, 1961: 2).

Self-Assessment Exercise

1. _____ is a philosophical inquiry into the most basic and general features of reality and our place in it.
2. Metaphysics according to _____ is the ontological inquiry into the “Sein”, “being”, “to be” of all that there is: why there are essences.

1.4 Summary

This study unit addressed the question of what is metaphysics and the subject matter of metaphysics. This study unit examined the meaning of metaphysics, its branches and its nature. It revealed that the nature and focus of metaphysics is the effort to give the deepest meaning to all of reality. This effort includes not only the things that are beyond the physical but inclusive of the very things present in the physical as well. For example, while there is an interest to tell of the place of the human person within the attempt to construct a comprehensive story of reality. Thus seen, the discipline of metaphysics remains a core and an indispensable aspect of the human enterprise to make meaning of the universe.

1.5 References/Further Reading/Web Resources

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Koons, R. C. & Pickavance, T. H. (2015). *Metaphysics: The Fundamentals*. Chichester: Wiley Blackwell Publication.

Iroegbu, P. (1995). *Metaphysics: The Kpim of Philosophy*. Owerri: International Universities Press Ltd.

1.6 Possible Answers to SAE

1. Metaphysics; 2. Heidegger

UNIT 2 GENERAL ISSUES, PROBLEMS AND RELEVANCE OF METAPHYSICS

Unit Structure

- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Intended Learning Outcomes
- 2.3 General Issues in Metaphysics
 - 2.3.1 Relevance of Metaphysics
- 2.4 Summary
- 2.5 References/Further Reading/Web Resources
- 2.6 Possible Answers to SAE

2.1 Introduction

This unit examines the general issues, problems and the question of the relevance of metaphysics. It seeks to outline briefly what the fundamental issues in metaphysics are about with a view of setting the stage for our engagement with the next module on the systems of metaphysics.

2.2 Intended Learning Outcomes

By the of this unit, you will be able to:

- highlight the overview of the issues and problems of metaphysics; and
- examine the relevance of metaphysics against the backdrop of the anti-metaphysical thinking in society.

2.3 General Issues in Metaphysics

The primary goal is to examine some of the questions around the place and relevance of metaphysics to not only philosophy but other areas of life and society. While it must be acknowledged that the voyage of metaphysics had not always been a smooth sailing one, it is important for metaphysicians to always demonstrate what and why metaphysics is not only central to philosophy but other aspects of life particularly to contemporary problems and issues. Thus, at the end of this module students would be able to tell the importance of metaphysics.

The voyage of metaphysics has not been a smooth sailing one; indeed, during much of the middle half of the century, metaphysics was in the doldrums, at least within the analytic tradition. This was largely due to the anti-metaphysical influence of the two then dominant philosophical trends. Logical positivism and its formalistic, hyper-empiricist legacies lingered through the 1950s and 1960s in the United States, nourishing an atmosphere that did not encourage serious metaphysics, while in Britain

the anti-metaphysical animus derived from "ordinary language" philosophy and the later works of Wittgenstein. However, metaphysics began a surprisingly swift, robust comeback in the 1960s, and since then has been among the most active and productive areas of philosophy. It is now flourishing as never before, showing perhaps that our need for metaphysics is as basic as our need for philosophy itself. I believe our subsequent interactions will give a broad glimpse of metaphysics from the Ancient through this century.

According to Hamlyn (1995: 9), "from time to time in the history of philosophical thought philosophers of the positivist orientation have come up with criteria of meaningfulness by which metaphysics could be shown to be nonsense in one fell swoop. Hume, for example, wished to consign to the flames anything that contained, in effect, pure *a priori* reasoning, except for 'abstract reasoning concerning quantity and number'. Later philosophers, such as Ayer, have claimed that because metaphysical propositions are not verifiable by reference to experience and are not merely logical or mathematical in content they are nonsense. In neither of the cases is there an attempt to examine metaphysical arguments closely".

2.3.1 Relevance of Metaphysics

Aja (1996: 21) presents an analogy to demonstrate the relevance of metaphysics to philosophy as well as other disciplines. In the analogy philosophy is considered as a tree whose survival depends on its root through which the tree is not only anchored but the requisite nutrients it needs to flourish and fructify are obtained and supplied from the ground which in turn feed into the various branches that bear fruits as imagery and representative of the various sciences. From this imagery one can then suggest that the survival of the tree itself, quality and in fact quantity of the fruits are largely dependent on the extent to which the roots are well rooted to provide for the entire tree to flourish. Little wonder metaphysics is considered to be the capstone of philosophy such that when philosophy is emptied of metaphysics, it renders it very barren.

It is no doubt that some metaphysical positions have in the past gone so abstract, hair-splitting and grossly *noumenal* that they were completely removed from the very reality they set out to explain. They became so transcendental to be true. In some systems, the science became simply a doctrine of axioms that explains neither this-worldly nor the other-worldly reality. It became entirely irrelevant. It must strive not to be reduced to the branch of empirical sciences, the discipline ought to be a relevant undertaking. It must seek to address the burning problems of concrete reality at its own level and with its own method. Such issues that must be investigated must reflect on questions of the after-life, the fate of the dead, the relationship between life and the after-life, the various nuances of the

constituents of the human person in the vast universe of which the human person is part, (Iroegbu 1995: 31).

Self-Assessment Exercise

1. Ayer, have claimed that because metaphysical propositions are not verifiable by reference to experience and are not merely logical or mathematical in content they are nonsense.
2. Pick the odd choice (a) Ayer (b) Russell (c) Carnap (d) Heidegger

2.4 Summary

This study unit examined and outlined some of the general issues and problems in metaphysics. It also discussed the relevance of metaphysics against the backdrop of the growing positivistic culture that tend to see the end of metaphysics. Despite all of the anti-metaphysical tendencies the discipline of metaphysics has continued to wax stronger than ever as a deeply relevant and intellectually rewarding enterprise not only for the individual philosopher but also the various sciences and society at large. Metaphysics remains the soul of philosophy to such an extent that to empty philosophy of metaphysics is to render philosophy barren. A thorough assessment of the place of metaphysics reveals also how pervasive metaphysics is. It must however be cautious in the matters it indulges with so as to avoid the charge of irrelevance as has happened in the course of the history of metaphysics when it went about concerning itself with hair-splitting and unnecessarily abstract matters. For metaphysics to remain alive, it must endeavor to deal with issues that are of significant importance to humans and society at large.

2.5 References/Further Reading/Web Resources

- Aja, E. (1996). *What is Philosophy? An African Inquiry*. Enugu: Donze Family Circle Publication.
- Hamlyn, D. W. (1995). *Metaphysics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

2.6 Possible Answers to SAE

1. Ayer; 2. (d)

UNIT 3 THE FUTILITY OF ELIMINATING METAPHYSICS

- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Intended Learning Outcomes
- 3.3 August Comte on Metaphysics
 - 3.3.1 David Hume on Metaphysics
 - 3.3.2 Logical Positivism and the Futility of Eliminating Metaphysics
- 3.4 Summary
- 3.5 References/Further Reading/Web Resources
- 3.6 Possible Answers to SAE

3.1 Introduction

In this unit, we are going to look at how some scholars and school of thought try to show that metaphysics is useless or meaningless to acquiring knowledge. Their conviction allowed them to think that it should be eradicated from any serious intellectual pursuits. This unit is going to consider their arguments and the futile efforts toward the elimination of metaphysics.

3.2 Intended Learning Outcomes

By the of this unit, you will be able to:

- explain the arguments of Comte and Hume against metaphysics;
- explain the argument of logical positivism against metaphysics; and
- state how futile it is, the effort of removing metaphysics from intellectual pursuits.

3.3 August Comte on Metaphysics

August Comte is one of the earliest critiques of metaphysics in the history of Western philosophy. He lived between 1798-1857 in France. August Comte was a French philosopher and one of the foremost social theorists of his time. In what he calls the 'laws of three stages', Comte accounts for how one can come to have knowledge from the period of antiquity up till the present time.

Comte's stages were (1) the *theological* stage, (2) the *metaphysical* stage, and (3) the *positive* stage. (1) The Theological stage was seen from the perspective of 19th century France as preceding the Enlightenment, in which man's place in society and society's restrictions upon man were

referenced to God. Man blindly believed in whatever he was taught by his ancestors. He believed in a supernatural power. Fetishism played a significant role during this time. (2) By the "Metaphysical" stage, Comte referred not to the Metaphysics of Aristotle or other ancient Greek philosophers. Rather, the idea was rooted in the problems of French society subsequent to the revolution of 1789. This Metaphysical stage involved the justification of *universal rights* as being on a vauntedly higher plane than the authority of any human ruler to counteract, although said rights were not referenced to the sacred beyond mere metaphor. This stage is known as the stage of investigation, because people started reasoning and questioning although no solid evidence was laid. The stage of investigation was the beginning of a world that questioned authority and religion. (3) In the Scientific stage, which came into being after the failure of the revolution and of Napoleon, people could find solutions to social problems and bring them into force despite the proclamations of *human rights* or prophecy of *the will of God*. Science started to answer questions in full stretch (Comte;1974:27).

From what we can see in the philosophy of August Comte, it is easy to see that he is calling for the removal of metaphysics in human thoughts and then to be replaced by scientific thoughts. Thus, in his opinion metaphysics has no relevance. In the 20th century, the logical positive school furthered this thought. We shall look at them very soon but before that we shall be looking at how David Hume also called for the elimination of metaphysics. For him, being an empiricist, all knowledge come from experience and then to posit the existence of abstract things for him is a taboo.

3.3.1 David Hume's Critique of Metaphysics

David Hume is one of the most popular Scottish philosophers that has ever lived and come from that country. The profundity of his thoughts is still very much relevant in today's discussions of metaphysics and epistemology.

Being an empiricist, David Hume believes in the idea of getting knowledge from experience and applying rational ideas into it. In his paper 'Skeptical and Academic Philosophy', like Comte, Hume debunks the possibility of attaining knowledge from theology. He says in his own words:

Divinity or Theology, as it proves the existence of a Deity, and the immortality of souls, is composed partly of reasonings concerning particular, partly concerning general facts. It has a foundation in reason, so far as it is supported by experience. But its best and most solid foundation is faith and divine revelation (Hume; 2007:120).

He moves on to give a great rejection of the metaphysics enterprise as a whole in the following words:

When we run over libraries, persuaded of these principles, what havoc must we make? If we take in our hand any volume; of divinity or school metaphysics, for instance; let us ask, Does it contain any abstract reasoning concerning quantity or number? No. Does it contain any experimental reasoning concerning matter of fact and existence? No. Commit it then to the flames: For it can contain nothing but sophistry and illusion (Hume; 2007:120).

We shall now be looking at the logical positive school who made a fusion of both the views of August Comte and David Hume in their own rejection of metaphysics.

3.4 Logical Positivism and the Futility of Eliminating Metaphysics

The logical positive school developed around 1920s in Austria. It was a group formed by leading philosophers of science, mathematics, linguists, scientists etc. They met in Vienna and hence they are also known as the Vienna Circle. This group has the following persons as members, A.J. Ayer, Bertrand Russell, Moritz Schlick, Ludwig Wittgenstein and many others. The group was concerned with the analysis of language and meaning. Ayer for instance puts it that “a philosopher that cannot master language is like a mathematician that cannot handle numerals” (Ayer;1952). They announced that the central task of philosophy is to assist the scientists with the language they need to communicate their discoveries. Logical positivism is convinced that science has taken up all the facts and that there is none left for the use of philosophy any more (Stumpf;1979).

They used mainly the idea of cognitive meaningfulness and the verification principle to make their ideas of science distinct from other disciplines. A statement is either analytic or else speaking nonsense. This group of scholars had the sole intention of demarcating the sciences from non-sciences and they saw metaphysics as a non-science whose language they cannot accommodate. Hence they said that every word must correspond to a fact and every fact must be verifiable and since the metaphysical enterprise cannot be able to accommodate some certain kinds of fact and since the language of metaphysicians are not verifiable, metaphysics as a discipline ought to be erased. Simply put, the verification principle implores that every statement or matter of fact must correspond to something tangible (Stumpf;1979). In other words, the verification principle implies that every state of affair should be corroborated and

should also be confirmed before the truth or falsity of such propositions expressing such state of affairs could be ascertained.

It must be stated that the verification principle of Alfred Jules Ayer is not even peculiar to him. He borrowed the idea from William Ockham's Razor but with very minor modifications. Ockham had insisted that "entities should not be multiplied beyond necessity" and this is what some scholars have used to reject metaphysical ideas.

From the thoughts of the logical positivists, William Quine reacts to the distinction between the analytic philosophy of language of the Vienna Circle and also shows that the verification principle supplied to the group by Ayer's *Language Truth and Logic*. We may observe that one of the primary purposes of Quine is to show that the elimination of metaphysics based on the arguments of the logical positivists is invalid. Quine intends to let us understand that the two principles upon which the empiricists who intend to reject metaphysics base their claims is on the distinction between analytic and synthetic statement on the one hand while on the other hand, it rests on the verification principle which in Quinean terms stands for reductionism.

Quine is of the conviction that one can attack the analytic/synthetic distinction in at least three different ways:

1. by claiming that the analytic/synthetic distinction is itself meaningless;
2. by claiming that it has no philosophical value (that it can't explain what it purports to explain); and
3. by denying that there are any analytic statements - all statements are synthetic.

The attack of analyticity by Quine tells us more about the inadequacies of those who want to tell us about the futility of metaphysics. The attempts by Comte, Hume and the logical positivists to eliminate metaphysics because of their perceived notion that metaphysics says nothing about the real world is erroneous. Let us consider the attack on the analytic/synthetic distinction briefly.

The first task Quine sets for himself in "Two Dogmas" is to undermine the distinction between analytic and synthetic statements. Let's start with analytic. Let's have some examples:

"No unmarried man is married." "No bachelor is married." "If a thing is red, then it's colored." "Either Nixon was impeached or Nixon wasn't impeached."

Observing some features such examples have in common (e.g., they are not very informative; their truth seems guaranteed in advance, as it were), philosophers since Kant have sought to characterize them in a general way.

Kant characterizes an analytic truth as one in which no more is attributed to the subject of the statement that is already contained in the subject. As Quine points out, this characterization is limited to sentences of subject-predicate form; and it involves the unexplained notion of containment. Kant offered an alternative characterization: a statement is analytic if its negation is self-contradictory. Again, this is not satisfactory, because the notion of self-contradiction is itself in need of explication (to allow extension to 'conceptual' as opposed to 'logical' contradictoriness).

Frege distinguished two classes of analytic truths:

- (i) truths of logic: "No unmarried man is married", "Either p or not-p";
- (ii) truths which can be turned into a logical truth by substituting synonyms for synonyms: "Every bachelor is an unmarried man" (bachelor =d unmarried man).

The modern way to define an analytic statement is: "an analytic truth is true solely in virtue of meaning". This is also a notion Quine wants to attack.

What about synthetic truths?

"The average rainfall in Los Angeles is about 12". "Bush is the U.S. president". "There are 20 students in this class today."

These statements, if they are true, are not true in virtue of meanings alone, but in virtue of the facts.

There are examples which suggest the distinction is not as clear cut as it may appear: "Everything green is extended" "Nothing is red and green all over", but it has long been made.

So, if we can find a good definition of synonymy, then our notion of analyticity for this second class will be firmly anchored. A natural claim in our example would be to say that 'bachelor' and 'unmarried man' are synonymous, the same in meaning, as a matter of definition. This is how we define the word 'bachelor'. But this won't do. Who defines 'bachelor' this way? The dictionary? This is getting things the wrong way around. The dictionary is supposed to capture some antecedent regularities in the use of terms, not to introduce them. Lexicographers

don't define, they report. So the dictionary definition must rely on prior conception of synonymy. It would be circular to characterize synonymy in terms of definition. Whatever synonymy is, it appears to be grounded in actual linguistic usage; a dictionary definition is a report of this usage, and depends on the notion of synonymy.

Another natural thought is this: The terms 'bachelor' and 'unmarried man' are synonymous because they can be interchanged in whatever sentences they occur in, without changing the truth value of the sentence. "No bachelor is happy" "There are x bachelors in the U.S" (Quine;1951). So def.: 2 terms are synonymous if we can always interchange them without altering the t.v. of the sentence in which they occur. This won't do as it stands. There are obvious cases of failure of substitution (within quotation, as part of phrases "Bachelor of Arts", in intentional contexts.)

But even if we get around these cases, there is a problem. How might we be sure that interchangeability is a sufficient condition for synonymy? Here's one way:

Necessarily all and only bachelors are bachelors. If "bachelors" and "unmarried males" are synonymous we ought to be able to substitute them in the context "Necessarily...". And we can. But we've shown that interchangeability 'salva veritate' is sufficient to give us synonymy only by the use of the word 'necessarily'. But 'necessarily' depends on the prior notion 'analytic'. An analytic truth is true in virtue of meaning, hence true no matter how the world is, hence necessary. Analyticity grounds necessity. (A statement is necessary if it's analytic.) So again we get a circle.

To put it briefly, Quine's argument against the distinction is this: We can't define the notion of an analytic statement without using other terms which are just as much in need of definition, and can often be shown to themselves require the notion of analyticity. The notions of analyticity, synonymy and necessity form a little circle none of which is even antecedently understood by us (let alone explicitly definable) independently of the other notions.

Can we use this as a definition of analyticity? It would be as good as the verificationist theory of meaning. Quine argues that the notion of *individual* verification conditions can at best attach to observation sentences. Nonobservation sentences are interconnected; only a whole body of nonobservation sentences can be verified/falsified, not individual sentences.

With regards to reductionism, Quine is claiming that such a venture is also profitless for the empiricist. He questions what the terms used by the

logical positivists such as verificationism and falsibility in their schema. What is verifiable/falsifiable is the totality of our sentences. Now, according to verificationism, what is meaningful must be verifiable/falsifiable (Quine;1951). And Quine accepts that. But this means that, for him, the unit of significance, what is meaningful is the whole of language. Quine speaks of a person's total theory: that is, all the sentences you hold to be true about the world. In these terms, the unit of significance is the person's total theory

In this section, we want to criticize using our own original thinking the verification principle and give us the required thoughts that metaphysics is a very important for human knowledge advancement.

Firstly, the verification principle cannot be verified (Stumpf;1979). For instance, if the verification principle is saying that we should believe in gravity because objects fall to the ground, it has not told us exactly how we can come to believe that the verification principle is true. This means that the verification principle is true in as much as it can refer to some kind of phenomena but it cannot in the same vein prove how we can believe the verification principle to be true.

Secondly, the affinity between the verification principle of Ayer and the logical atomism of Russell are very important and should be criticized at the same time. Before we criticize these ideas, we shall be looking to telling ourselves briefly about the logical atomism of Russell since we are already aware of the verification principle.

In Russellean terms, every word must correspond to the fact and since we need to use words in a verification principle. The problem with logical atomism on its own is that there is no way we can claim to have the knowledge of things if they don't correspond to the words. For instance, there are many words we used that do not correspond to fact accurately. Pain, for instance is a relative term and what is painful to A may be pleasurable for B. We can see that even in this case, appearance and reality as a subject matter is still playing a relevant role in linguistic philosophy. In this case, how for sure can we say the logical atomist can be correct?

We can observe from all of the things that we have been saying all along that metaphysics as eliminated by the logical positive school is totally untenable. The relevance of metaphysics cannot be de-emphasized in the 21st century way of thinking. Even the methodology or criterion for adjudging a discipline as a science and non-science is being called into question. The verification principle has been shown by Quine to be very inadequate and we have also shown that there are many terms that cannot be reduced to an atomic fact as Russell would want us to believe.

When we make a case against metaphysics, we are to be very careful because we are dealing with a branch of philosophy that is the central core of the discipline of philosophy itself.

Self-Assessment Exercise

1. Pick out the odd choice (a) Ayer (b) Comte (c) Hume (d) Quine
2. Hume says we should commit to flames metaphysical treatises (a) True (b) False (c) Undetermined (d) None of these

3.5 Summary

In this unit, our major task has been to look at the rejection of metaphysics by several scholars from Comte to the logical positive or Vienna Circle. August Comte believes that we are in the scientific age of reasoning and any abstract and metaphysical way of thinking should be discouraged. Hume also recognized that we cannot obtain knowledge through some specific kind of experimental reasoning and calls for the burning of every book that contains metaphysical and theological thoughts. The role of the logical positive school is also relevant and their logical atomism and verification principle were the tools used to eliminate the relevance of metaphysics. We supported Quine's reasoning that the logical positivists distinction between analytic/synthetic statements is unclear and the verification principle which he calls reductionism also inadequate. We later on showed that both the verification principle and the logical atomism of Russell are themselves inadequate in what they claim to be their central task of cognitive meaningfulness.

3.6 References/Further Reading/Web Resources

- Ayer, A.J. (1952). *Language Truth and Logic*, New York, Dover Publications
- Comte, A. (1974). *The positive philosophy of Auguste Comte freely translated and condensed by Harriet Martineau*. New York: AMS Press. (Original work published in 1855, New York: Calvin Blanchard)
- Feyerbrand, P. (1992). *Against Method*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.
- Hume, D (2007) *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, New York, Oxford University Press.
- Quine, W.V. (1951). 'Two Dogmas of Empiricism' in *Philosophical Review* 60
- Stumpf, S.E. (1979). *Elements of Philosophy: An Introduction*, New York, McGraw Hill Books

3.7 Possible Answers to SAE

1. (d); 2. (a)

UNIT 4 THE RELEVANCE OF METAPHYSICS

Unit Structure

- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 Intended Learning Outcomes
- 4.3 Relevance of Metaphysics
- 4.4 Summary
- 4.5 References/Further Reading/Web Resources
- 4.6 Possible Answers to SAE

4.1 Introduction

Thus far, the previous units in this module have looked at the various challenges militated against metaphysics. We have also indicated what metaphysics means. In this unit, we are going to consider what relevance metaphysics has in spite of the various objections leveled against it. We are going to state how it is relevance especially for science.

4.2 Intended Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- identify some uses of metaphysics
- state why metaphysics cannot be eradicated.

4.3 Relevance of Metaphysics

Today, most people do not know that all of the thinking done in the scientific enterprise may be traced to the influence of the metaphysics of several centuries ago and appearance and reality as a metaphysical problem has been at the pivot of all these achievements. There are several scholars who subscribe to this view that science has a metaphysical underpinning. Some of the popular names are Alexander Koyre, Imre Lakatos and Paul Feyerabend. There are several work to this effect among scholars.

Much recent work has been devoted to analyzing the role of metaphysics in scientific theorizing. Alexandre Koyré led this movement, declaring in his book *Metaphysics and Measurement*, "It is not by following experiment, but by outstripping experiment, that the scientific mind makes progress" (Koyre;1968:80). Imre Lakatos maintained that all scientific theories have a metaphysical "hard core" essential for the generation of hypotheses and theoretical assumptions. Thus, according to Lakatos, "scientific changes are connected with vast cataclysmic metaphysical revolutions (Lakatos;1970).

For Paul Feyerabend, even science does not need rationalists to stand on its feet. What science has offered us is a century of failure and to say metaphysics is irrelevant as some want to say is very untrue. In his own words, Feyerabend showed that some of the disciplines that have a distinct logic of their own today may be said to have been plucked from metaphysics. He explains that:

Scientific education as we know it today has precisely this aim. It simplifies 'science' by simplifying its participants: first, a domain of research is defined. The domain is separated from the rest of history (physics, for example, is separated from metaphysics and from theology) and given a 'logic' of its own. A thorough training in such a 'logic' then conditions those working in the domain; it makes their actions more uniform and it freezes large parts of the historical process as well (Feyerabend;1992:11).

Now, several scientists are usually prone to say some disciplines should adopt their methodology as though the scientific method is the best out of all. Feyerabend insists that:

Again I want to make two points: first, that science can stand on its own feet and does not need any help from rationalists, secular humanists, Marxists and similar religious movements; and, secondly, that non-scientific cultures, procedures and assumptions can also stand on their own feet and should be allowed to do so, if this is the wish of their representatives. Science must be protected from ideologies; and societies, especially democratic societies, must be protected from science. This does not mean that scientists cannot profit from a philosophical education and that humanity has not and never will profit from the sciences (Feyerabend;1992:iii).

We cannot claim that metaphysics has no role to play. Most of the scientific disciplines that we know today derived their inspiration from the thoughts of metaphysicians. The work of Charles Darwin that has been deemed great in the biological sciences made a lot of inputs from the biology of Aristotle whose metaphysics assisted him in the formulation of categories of being.

In the 21st century, we speak of satellites, we speak of space ship and many other astrophysical and technological development but we fail to pay little attention to the great work of Thales who was taunted by a Miletian made for falling into the well. We believe that the moment of appearance and reality created such a scenario. Today, we need not gaze at the cosmos with the naked eye and fall into the well like Thales, thanks to the development of authentic and sophisticated machines for viewing space. But are these machines developed according to the principles of optics,

using the metaphysical problems of appearance and reality as a foundation.

From the expositions that we have done previously, we can see that metaphysics, a discipline that is dedicated to the study of reality is very important and it has been committed to the revelation of most of the things that we have come to know. There is no reason enough to say that metaphysics is totally irrelevant. But some scholars have come up with the notion that the metaphysical enterprise is not worthy of giving serious thoughts at all. But these scholars are mistaken because even science cannot stand on its feet without metaphysics as its foundation. In the 21st century, this has been proven to be the case. With the development of postmodern scholars that have even raised question as to the authenticity of the telescopes used to sight the cosmos, metaphysics and the problem of appearance and reality is continually relevant.

Self-Assessment Exercise

1. Pick the odd choice (a) Lakatos (b) Popper (c) Russell (d) Feyerabend
2. The work of _____ that has been deemed great in the biological sciences made a lot of inputs from the biology of Aristotle whose metaphysics assisted him in the formulation of categories of being.

4.4 Summary

In this unit, we have been able to show that in spite of the problems that some scholars and schools of thought leveled against metaphysics, the enterprise is still up and doing. This is demonstrated in the way through which it has contributed to the growth of science.

4.5 References/Further Reading/Web Resources

Feyerabend, P. (1992). *Against Method*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Koyre, A. (1968). *Metaphysics and Measurement*. Harvard: Harvard University Press

Lakatos, I (1970). "Science: Reason or Religion" in A. Musgrave and I. Lakatos (eds). *Criticism and the Growth of Science*. Vol 1. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

4.6 Possible Answers to SAE

1. (c); 2. Charles Darwin

End of Module Questions

1. According to Heidegger, the question, why are there essents rather than nothing?
2. The voyage of metaphysics has not been a smooth sailing one (a) True (b) False (c) Undetermined (d) None of these
3. August Comte highlights _____ number of stages of human history.
4. _____ maintained that all scientific theories have a metaphysical "hard core" essential for the generation of hypotheses and theoretical assumptions.

MODULE 2 SYSTEMS OF METAPHYSICS

INTRODUCTION

This module sets out to examine the main systems of metaphysics highlighted in the course description. It seeks to expose the overarching thematic of the various systems of metaphysics, identify their main proponents, historical developments and the various inflections that these systems now take in contemporary thought. There are numerous systems of metaphysics but our focus however is limited to the assessment and evaluation of four namely; universalism, nominalism, realism and idealism. These systems and theories seek to simply describe the nature of what there is in reality or how we can characterise the basic nature of the world in which we live. The systems of metaphysics to be examined in this present module include: Realism, Idealism, nominalism and Universalism. We seek to have a general broad characterization of the main themes of Realism, Idealism, Nominalism and Universalism. Each of the four systems of metaphysics will be examined per study unit in order to make for thorough assessment of their features and variants. At the end of the module students should be able to tell an untrained inquirer the basic ideas and subject matter of the themes we shall consider under this module as study units. Part of the concern also is to endeavor to demonstrate the basic differences there are and how these systems relate in some ways. Therefore for this module, four study units will constitute the significant major moments for our reflections.

UNIT 1 REALISM

Unit Structure

- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Intended Learning Outcomes
- 1.3 What is Realism?
- 1.4 Summary
- 1.5 References/Further Readings/Web Resources
- 1.6 Possible Answers to SAE

1.1 Introduction

This study unit discusses realism as one of the popular metaphysical systems in the history of metaphysics. It seeks to highlight the various types or variants of realism and the various proponents of these various forms that it has assumed. This study unit presents students with what realism means; that is, what it means to say that something is real. It examines the metaphysical system of realism. It seeks to outline and describe the main current of this system by identifying the various forms

or variants of the system, the main proponents and the historical development of realism as a metaphysical system.

1.2 Intended Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- explain what realism as a metaphysical system is;
- discuss the historical development of realism; and
- explain the various variants or types of realism and of course their proponents.

1.3 What is Realism?

A proper understanding of realism as a metaphysical system or doctrine requires a clear clarification of the terms real and reality. The term real means something that exists as a fact; it is actual rather than imaginary, fantasy or ideal. It refers to things or events that exist in their own right as opposed to that which is imaginary, fictitious or ideal. Reality on the other hand is therefore the state or quality of being real or actual existence in contrast to what is merely apparent or just appearance.

Realism as a metaphysical system signifies the assertion of the existence of a reality independently of our thoughts or beliefs about it. It holds that our minds or what we think about a reality cannot change it. The reality should be accepted and confronted as it is. It is therefore a practical understanding and acceptance of the actual nature of the world, rather than an idealized or romantic outlook of it, (Kabuk 2017: 77). Realism (after the Latin word for “thing”) is the position defended by realists who “affirm the existence of special things (the universals) that exist over and above the world of particular things”.

There are different types of realism; rational realism and natural/scientific realism. Rational realism is further divided into classical realism and scholasticism. The classical realists base their ideas on the thoughts of Aristotle who is believed to be the founder of realism as a reaction and rejection of the transcendental world of ideas created in the philosophy of his tutor, Plato. In Aristotle, the material world is not only real but does contain the entirety of all that there is to know composed of matter and form. The scholastics version, on the other hand, is based on the medieval Christian thinkers. Both versions of realism admit that material world is real as it exists outside the minds of those who observe it. The proponents maintain that the rational universe of the sensible objects and their orderliness are the creative act of the supreme intelligible being (God).

The second version of realism is the natural or scientific realism. The rise of this philosophy was witnessed during the renaissance era where scholars sought for the supremacy of science over other disciplines in answering basic enigmatic questions. The rise of science in Continental Europe which swept almost all areas of enquiries changed the societal orientation throughout the continent and impacted the emerging world. The proponents of this form of realism include; Francis Bacon, John Locke, David Hume, John S. Mill, A.N. Whitehead and Bertrand Russell, (Kabuk 2017: 78) just to name a few.

This version posits that philosophy seeks to intimate the rigour and objectivity of science since the world around us, and all that there is, are real. It is the task of science to investigate its nature or properties. Hence, natural or scientific realists are found to be skeptical of all forms of idealism but are seen to be experimental in nature.

Self-Assessment Exercise

1. _____ is further divided into classical realism and scholasticism.
2. Pick out the odd choice (a) Mill (b) Bacon (c) Spinoza (d) Whitehead.

1.4 Summary

Realism and its various forms were highlighted in this study unit. Realism opposes idealism in defense of the view that various objects in the world of our experience or in the world generally are real and actual. These real or actual existents are perceived by the senses whether the mind reports of them or not. In other words, objects exist independently of the mind. A succinct presentation of realism as a metaphysical system was achieved in the study unit. It mentioned the two versions of realism; the rational and the scientific forms of realism; it also identified and historicized the views and proponents of the various versions of realism. It also underscores the fact that in spite of the divergences or differences among the various views held by the proponents of the different forms or versions of realism, there is a common tenet that real and objective nature of the natural world, objects or things, exists independently of the human mind. In other words, these things or realities are extra-mental realities, different from the mind that perceives or thinks about them, (Aja 2015: 129). Realism as presented is the view that there is a reality independent of the mind and independent of conscious beings. The impetus towards realism comes in turn from the commonsense reason that there is surely more to what exists than what is simply within our minds.

1.5 References/Further Readings/Web Resources

Aja, E. (2015). *What is Philosophy? An African Inquiry*. Enugu: Donze Press.

Kabuk, V.S. (2017). *A Fundamental Approach to Philosophy of Education*. PortHarcourt: HOI Publishing Company.

1.6 Possible Answers to SAE

1. Rational realism; 2. (c)

UNIT 2 IDEALISM

Unit Structure

- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Intended Learning Outcomes
- 2.3 What is Idealism?
 - 2.3.1 Views of Some Selected Idealists
- 2.4 Summary
- 2.5 References/Further Readings/Web Resources
- 2.6 Possible Answers to SAE

2.1 Introduction

This study unit discusses Idealism as one of the popular metaphysical systems in the history of metaphysics. It seeks to highlight the various types or variants of idealism and the various proponents of these various forms that it has assumed. This study unit examines idealism as one of the main metaphysical systems. It seeks to outline and describe the basic tenet of this system by identifying the various forms or variants of the system, the main proponents and the historical development of idealism.

2.2 Intended Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- define the basic tenets of idealism;
- state the various strands of the system; and
- trace the historical development of the system.

2.3 What is Idealism?

The word is a derivative of the noun ‘ideal’, which suggests freedom from inflections of the material world or unreality of what depends simply on the mind (Kabuk 2017: 68). Idealism implies that reality is actually dependent on the mind rather than on something that exists independently of the mind. In other words, the ideas, and thoughts constitute the essence or fundamental nature of all realities. Idealism therefore is the system of thought or doctrine that emphasizes mind, spirit or the soul as ultimate realities. The material world is only a manifestation of a reflection of what is in the mind or the spirit. In this case, we cannot truly know anything for certain about whatever external world may exist; all we can know are the mental constructs created by our minds, which we can then attribute to an external world.

Idealism involves the thesis that all we can be aware of (and therefore all

that what we are aware of can consist in) is such representations or ideas. In the 17th/18th century usage of the term, ‘idea’ does not mean merely ‘concept’ but any mental item which is, so to speak, of something. It is worth noting also that Plato’s so-called idealism is quite different thing from the idealism during the era referred to above; it is a theory to the effect that sensible things, the objects of perception, are to be explained by reference to ideas/forms, the ideal entities postulated by Plato.

Idealism is contrasted primarily with realism which holds that reality is independent of the mind. However, views are considered idealists’ when they hold that reality is outside the mind but loosely dependent on the mind for their consciousness, (Kabuk 69). Narrower versions of idealism claim that our understanding of reality reflects the workings of our minds first and foremost – that the properties of objects have no standing independent of the minds perceiving them. Extreme versions of idealism deny that any world at all exists outside of our minds. Theistic form of idealism limits reality to the mind of God. Other forms of idealism include Plato’s, epistemological, subjective, objective, transcendental and absolute idealism. Major idealists include Plato, Gottfried W. Leibniz, G.W.F. Hegel, I. Kant, G. Berkeley, etc.

2.3.1 Views of Some Selected Idealists

The origin of idealism is attributed to the works of Plato who first projected the idea of the world of forms as different from the world of the senses. According to Plato, the material world and other material realities are mere reflections of the ideal world in the world of forms. The sensual or material world is transient, imperfect, corruptible, and mutable while the world of forms is incorporeal, incorruptible, immutable, permanent and perfect.

In the medieval period, following St. Augustine the world of God is the ideal world. For him, it is the soul rather than the mind that has knowledge and access of the truth given its closest nature to God from whom it emanates. In the modern era, Descartes argues that all ideas have no separate existence outside the perfect being who is the foundation and object of thought. For Berkeley, the fundamental principle of all of realities is perception as contained in his famous dictum, “esse est percipi” to mean “to be is to be perceived”. This means that reality or existence depends fundamentally on its perception by the mind. It was Hegel who introduced his idea of dialectical idealism wherein the absolute spirit advances itself towards perfection by undergoing through a series of thesis and its antithesis to form a synthesis constantly evolving progressively in view of perfection, (Madsen 2009:115).

Self-Assessment Exercise

1. In the modern era, _____ argues that all ideas have no separate existence outside the perfect being who is the foundation and object of thought.
2. _____ implies that reality is actually dependent on the mind rather than on something that exists independently of the mind.

2.4 Summary

The reflective exercise has defined idealism as a metaphysical system that stresses the supremacy or superiority of the mind or idea over matter. It emphasizes that reality is mental rather than material; spiritual rather than physical. For the idealists, therefore, the entire existence or reality exists only as ideas in the universal mind and the particular mind (human mind) interpreted as part of the universal mind. The study unit has examined idealism as a metaphysical system in contradistinction to realism. Idealism as presented rejects the view that material existence can be independent of the mind by defending the view point that existing reality is simply ideas or the mind that perceives it. The study unit also highlighted the various versions of idealism and reechoed some of the particular emphasis made by some philosophers in the course of the history of philosophy.

2.5 References/Further Readings/Web Resources

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2.6 Possible Answers to SAE

1. Descartes; 2. Idealism

UNIT 3 NOMINALISM

Unit Structure

- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Intended Learning Outcomes
- 3.3 What is Nominalism?
- 3.4 Summary
- 3.5 References/Further Readings/Web Resources
- 3.6 Possible Answers to SAE

3.1 Introduction

This study unit seeks to examine what the fundamental thrust of nominalism is and to highlight the contributions of various philosophers on building the metaphysical system to what it is today and the various forms or types of nominalism that there are. This study unit examines the metaphysical system of nominalism. It seeks to outline and describe the main current of this system by identifying the various forms or variants of the system, the main proponents and the historical development of the system.

3.2 Intended Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- Help the student to understand the basic ideas at the centre of nominalism;
- Facilitate an appreciation of the historical development of the system; and
- Know the various forms that the system has taken.

3.3 What is Nominalism?

Nominalism is the rejection of universals. It is also the rejection of abstract objects in another equally important sense. This is the view that there is nothing in the universe except particulars; particulars are all we can perceive, and particulars are all that there are (Aja 1996: 141). In the consideration of the ancient problem of universals as per the place of properties we very often talk about or refer to when we describe objects of our experience or make normative assessments; two usually opposing schools of thought are immediately evident; realism and nominalism.

Realism (after the Latin word for “thing”) is the position defended by realists who “affirm the existence of special things (the universals) that exist over and above the world of particular things”. Their opponents are called the nominalists (after the Latin word for name). While the realists

believe that the universals, such as property of being a horse or the property of being a water molecule, are real things needed to ground or explain in any ultimate way the obvious similarity of particular horses or particular water molecules to another. The universals are somehow shared by or present in those particular things, nominalists, in contrast, deny that we need any such metaphysical explanation of similarity: the particular things themselves suffice to explain when we use common names (like “horse” or “water molecule”) as we do”, (Koons & Pickavance 2015: 10). Other examples of these abstract objects or entities include; numbers, properties, possible world, and propositions.

Two versions of nominalism are popular in the literatures; one that denies or rejects universals and the second version is one that rejects abstract objects. The implication of this distinction is that there is a difference between universals and abstract terms. Universals can have particular objects instantiating them within space and time whereas abstract notions are atemporal and aspatial or simply they do not have spatial or temporal instantiations. Examples of philosophers in the course of history belong to one version of nominalism or the other. David Armstrong believed in universals but that everything that exist do so within space and time and so can be said to be a nominalist in the sense of denial or rejection of abstract entities. W.V.O. Quine, on the other hand, accepts sets or classes and accepts abstract entities but reject universals and can be said to be a nominalist in his rejection of universals.

Self-Assessment Exercise

1. Two versions of nominalism are popular in the literatures (a) Two (b) Three (c) Four (d) Five
2. _____ argues that there is nothing in the universe except particulars; particulars are all we can perceive, and particulars are all that there are.

3.4 Summary

This study unit has undertaken the exposition of what nominalism means. It considered nominalism in its two senses as fundamentally as an anti-realist school of thought: (a) as the rejection of universals, and (b) the rejection of abstract objects. Both senses imply that for nominalism as metaphysical system only concrete things or particular objects exist. The metaphysical system of nominalism though sounding ambiguous sometimes simply has been described and exposed in this study unit. The unit began with exposition of what nominalism means. Two senses of the term meaning to reject the reality of abstract objects and the rejection of universals were identified as key in our understanding of what the term

means. The notion does not only stop at rejecting the realities of both universals and abstract objects but defend the view that only particular objects exist. From these two senses, the unit drew and gave examples of what universals are as different from abstract objects. The former can be instantiated by particular objects whereas the latter do not have temporal or spatial relevant existence. An example of the latter is numbers.

3.5 References/Further Readings/Web Resources

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3.6 Possible Answers to SAE

1. (a); 2. Nominalism

UNIT 4 PROBLEM OF UNIVERSALS

Unit Structure

- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 Intended Learning Outcomes
- 4.3 What is Universalism?
 - 4.3.1 A Brief History of the Problem of Universals as Metaphysical Issue
- 4.4 Summary
- 4.5 References/Further Readings/Web Resources
- 4.6 Possible Answers to SAE

4.1 Introduction

This study unit discusses universalism as one of the popular metaphysical systems in the history of metaphysics. It seeks to highlight the various types or variants of universalism and the various proponents of these various forms that it has assumed. This study unit examines universalism as a system of metaphysics. It seeks to outline and describe the main current of universalism by identifying the various forms or variants of the system, the main proponents and the historical development of universalism. How universalism presents itself as a metaphysical problem or issue to some popular philosophers will also be given serious attention.

4.2 Intended Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- facilitate an appreciation of the historical development of universalism
- explain the various trends that are characteristic of systems in metaphysics
- state how problem of universals present itself as a philosophical problem.

4.3 What is Problem of Universals?

What is the exact nature of universals is a problem at the heart of universals and universalism? It is the case that there are concepts and ideas we use and have come to identify in our daily usage that speaks to this problem but we hardly pay close attention to them. For example, we very often describe certain actions to be good actions or wrong actions or describe certain things in terms of their shape and colour or size or quality in terms of these objects instantiating these so called qualities without deeply paying attention to where these qualities we use or say of these objects really inhere or exist. Or to say it differently, whether they exist in

these objects or whether their modes of existence is such that they are outside of these objects that instantiate them. So for example, we describe a ball as round as far as the shape is concerned with colour red as far as the colour is concerned.

The question and the problem then becomes whether the roundness or redness exist outside of the ball that is so described. According to Omoregbe (1996: 11), such things as beauty, justice, whiteness, goodness, humanity, etc are universals. They are universal concepts, but they are not just ideas in the mind. We recognize them in things that exhibit them, and this means that they are real though they are not physical. They are realities, though not tangible realities. It appears then that there is more top reality than what is utterly physical and in fact tangible. In western philosophical tradition, Socrates was the first to identify the universals and insisted upon the distinction between the things that exhibit them and the universals so exhibited by these particular things or acts. For example, when Socrates asked his contemporaries to define justice, and they went ahead to give examples of instances of just acts, Socrates would tell them they had not answered his questions as he was not asking for instances of just acts but justice itself. Given the distinction between just act and justice itself, it seems Socrates was right. So if this this case, then where does it exist or how does it exist brings to the fore the problem of universals. In the work, *Isagoge*, a commentary on the work of Porphyry Boethius asked whether universals were realities outside the mind or exclusively simply ideas in the mind. Are they real entities which could be found anywhere apart from the individual objects that manifests them? (Omoregbe 1996: 12).

From another angle, we can say that the problem of universals questions whether “a term (a noun or noun phrases) that applies to more than one thing (a “universal” term) denotes something that exists outside the mind. For example, when we say “Barack Obama is a man,” the first term, the name *Barack Obama*, names something that exists out there independent of the mind. But what about the term *man*? (Moore & Bruder, 2011:86-7). Those who think that universal terms like “man” denote something that exists outside the mind subscribe to realism; those who think they correspond only to concepts in the mind subscribe to conceptualism. Those who think you can account for universal terms without invoking universals either as real things out there in the world or as concepts in the mind subscribe to nominalism. Which of these theories, if any, is correct has been a perennial discourse among philosophers (Moore & Bruder, 2011:87).

This problem in the history of philosophy comes in many varieties. The paper upon which these words are typed is white. So is the paint of the room where the typing was carried out. Even the printer appears in white.

Now, does whiteness ‘exist’ apart such that each of these objects participates in this quality (whiteness) or is whiteness merely an existent in the human mind? As simple as this instance and as seemingly clear as a response may appear, the problems of universals and particulars is one of the foremost problems that has plagued philosophy to the present age right from the era of the ancient Greek scholars. There are several horses and these come in different shapes and sizes. However, all these horses share an attribute with the quality of ‘horseness’. Again, the question arises whether ‘horseness’ exists independently of particular horses that are perceived or in the human mind. Plato, one of the oldest and ancient scholars on the subject is convinced that the qualities ‘whiteness’ and ‘horseness’ as employed herein have independent existence from particular instances of white objects and horses. Aristotle and several other scholars argue contrary.

In the instances given, ‘whiteness’, ‘horseness’ are universals while existents that share these qualities are particulars. If this is the case, we are led to ask what connection there is between particulars and universals. If it is the case that there is a connection between particulars, what is it? Again, as simple, clear and distinct that this question appears, scholars have struggled to grapple with it for centuries. It is a problem that has bothered philosophic sages for centuries the same way the notion of wisdom has eluded finality (Oizerman, 1973). The problem of universals and particulars have garnered immense attention and literatures from scholars across centuries in a similar way attempts to define philosophy still does. It is not surprising that Theodor Oizerman opines that “philosophy as a problem for itself” (Oizerman, 1973:65).

4.3.1 A Brief History of the Problem of Universals as Metaphysical Issue

Only a handful of scholars are aware of the connection between the age long debate on the place of universals and the philosophy of language that gained prominence at the beginning of the 20th century. It all started with Plato and then like an avalanche, occupied the attention of scholars up to the present century. This section begins with a look at Plato and Aristotle on the subject matter as they construed it in ancient Greece. In the Medieval era, characterized with the ‘deification of human wisdom’ (Oizerman, 1973:36) we scoop the thoughts of William of Ockham and St. Thomas Aquinas showing how the same problem is masked in another way. Attention would reward the reader with the obvious that philosophy is not an esoteric affair neither is it necessarily anti-religious as various personalities from divergent religious background engage in philosophical problems that confront them.

The origin of the problem of universals is derived from the Platonic metaphysics otherwise popular known as the Theory of Forms. Plato's metaphysics appeared in several of his works and unlike Aristotle who is more systematic in his thoughts and ideas, Plato's work on each branch of philosophy are interwoven throughout his dialogues. According to Plato's Theory of Forms, what is truly real is not the objects we encounter in sensory experience but, rather, Forms, and these can only be grasped intellectually (Omeregbe, 1999). Therefore, once you know what Plato's Forms are, you will understand the Theory of Forms and the essentials of Platonic metaphysics (Moore and Bruder, 2011:38). Let us consider some instances of the Platonic assessment of the connection between the present world and the World of Forms.

Socrates, Simmias, and Cebes are all called 'men'; they have it in common that they are all men. Now when we say 'Simmias is a man' does the word 'man' stand for something in the way that the word 'Simmias' stands for the individual man Simmias? If so, what? Is it the same thing as the word 'man' stands for in the sentence 'Cebes is a man'? Plato's answer is yes: in each case in which such an expression occurs it stands for the same thing, namely, that which makes Simmias, Cebes, and Socrates all men. This is given by Plato various designations, Greek phrases corresponding for instance to 'the man himself', or 'that very thing which is man'. Because, in calling Socrates a man, Plato meant not that he was male, but that he was human, the common thing meant by 'man' can be called – by analogy with Plato's use in other cases – 'humanity'. But its best known designation is 'The Idea (or Form) of Man' (Anthony, 2006:40-1).

Another example should suffice. It is said that there are several circles. Coins, wheels, etc. all possess the quality of circularity. In the opinion of Plato, each of these particular instances of circularity (coins, wheels etc.) are poor imitations or copies of the real Form of Circularity which exists in the Intelligible World away from these particular instances. No matter how you draw these circles even with an excellent tool, you cannot get *perfect* Circularity, of which the one you drew are poor impressions. For Plato therefore, *Circularity* exists independently of the ways it manifests in terrestrial objects. Hence, universals are more real than particulars. For Plato, the Forms are the essence of things living in the World of Forms away from the corrupt particulars which are but poor imitations of them. Let us consider another example to deepen our comprehension of the subject matter.

Here is another example. Consider two beautiful objects: a beautiful statue and a beautiful house. These are two very different objects, but they have *something* in common—they both qualify as beautiful. Beauty is another example of a Form. Notice that beauty, like circularity, is not something you encounter directly in the physical world. What you encounter in the

physical world is always some object or other, a house or a statue or whatever, which may or may not be beautiful. But beauty itself is not something you meet up with; rather, you meet up with *objects* that to varying degrees possess beauty or, as Plato said, “participate” in the Form *beauty*. Beauty, like circularity, is an ideal thing, not a concrete thing (Moore & Bruder, 2011:40). Plato in the *Republic* makes his case with Socrates as his mouthpiece this:

First we must come to an understanding. Let me remind you of the distinction we drew earlier and have often drawn on other occasions, between the multiplicity of things that we call good or beautiful or whatever it may be and, on the other hand, Goodness itself or Beauty itself and so on. Corresponding to each of these sets of many things, we postulate a single Form or real essence, as we call it. Further, the many things, we say, can be seen, but are not objects of rational thought; whereas the Forms are objects of thought, but invisible (Plato, 1941:Book V).

It appears from the foregoing that universals (for Plato, these are the existents in the World of Forms) are the real essence of things from which sensible things that humans perceive in this terrestrial world get their fake duplicates. But this soon changed as Aristotle questions the Platonic Forms.

For Aristotle, “the subject of our inquiry is substance; for the principles and the causes we are seeking are those of substances” (Aristotle, 1973: 1069a). He proceeds to divide substance into three: sensible and perishable (e.g. plants and animals); sensible and eternal (Aristotle has in mind the Heavenly bodies), and immutable (Ferguson, 1972:122). In his own words Aristotle corroborates that:

There are three kinds of substance – one that is sensible (of which one subdivision is eternal and another is perishable; the latter is recognized by all men and includes e.g. plants and animals), of which we must grasp the elements whether one or many; and another that is immovable, and this certain thinkers assert to be capable of existing apart, some dividing into two, others identifying the Forms and the objects of mathematics, and others positing, of these two, only the objects of mathematics (Aristotle, 1973: 1069a).

Our concern would be the third kind of substance – the immutable. This third substance is eternal and an unmovable substance. Let us allow Aristotle speak for himself: “since there were three kinds of substance, two of them physical and one unmovable, regarding the latter, we must assert that it is necessary that there should be an eternal substance. For substances are the first of existing things, and if they are all destructible,

all things are destructible. But it is impossible that movement should either have come into being or cease to be (for it must always have existed), or that time should. For there could be not be a before and after if time did not exist” (Aristotle, 1973:1071b). Here Aristotle shows the correlation between the idea of motion and time. Movement, motion is eternal and this is true of time as well. Aristotle holds that the only continuous motion is locomotion; the only continuous locomotion is circular. There must therefore be an eternal circular motion. To produce this kind of motion, there must be an eternal substance capable of producing motion (unlike Plato’s Forms), whose very being is actuality and thus immateriality (Ferguson, 1972:123). Next Aristotle shows how it is possible for this eternal substance to participate in the business of motion as Pure Actuality without potentiality. This eternal substance, Aristotle calls The Unmoved mover, the final cause of the universe, God. Aristotle articulates that “we say therefore that God is a living being, eternal, most good, so that life and duration continues and eternal belong to God; for this is God” (Aristotle, 1973:1072b).

Aristotle despite attacking Plato could not but help commit the same error. The duplicity of Plato’s World of Forms was merely reduced by Aristotle to a single immutable and eternal substance that originates motion as Pure Actuality existing in another realm. Hence, here is another theory of universals. How did Aristotle attempt to dislodge Plato?

Aristotle gives the essence of the universe to something outside the universe with an independent existence of “thinking upon thinking” (Aristotle, 1973:1074b). His argument is usually termed the *Third Man Argument*. Plato said what ties two circular coins together, what they have in common, is the Form *circularity*. But what, Aristotle asked, ties the coins together *with* the Form *circularity*? Some *further* form? Well, what ties this further Form together with the first Form, yet *another* Form? The argument continues *ad infinitum*. This argument may be presented in another sense. All coins are circular. Plato thought they are all circular because they “partake” in *circularity*, which, Plato said, existed apart and separately from particular coins. Aristotle thought that Plato’s theory was metaphorical and meaningless. He held that universals like circularity have no independent existence apart from particular things. Aristotle is fairly convincing when he tells us what is wrong with Plato’s Theory of Forms, but he is less helpful in explaining just what universals are. The apparent failure of Aristotle (and Plato and their contemporaries) to produce a satisfactory theory of universals and their relationship to particulars resulted in an obsession with the problem through many centuries (Moore & Bruder, 2011:69).

It should be noticed that there has been a little progress between Plato and Aristotle on the problem of universals. In Plato’s metaphysics, the

universals exist in multiplicity in the World of Forms. For instance, *justice*, *circularity*, *man-ness*, *tree-ness*, *beauty*, *horseness* etc. live independently in the World of Forms. Aristotle merely reduces this multiplicity to just one eternal and immutable substance which exists outside the universe but nevertheless, is the originator of change. Closely knitted with this is Aristotle's distinction between *genus* and *species*. Aristotle sought to define things by determining how a thing is similar to other things (genus) and how it is specifically different (species, or specific difference) (Moore & Bruder, 2011:70).

The intellectual gymnastics of Plato and Aristotle on the subject of universals has realistic tendencies. However, while Platonic realism hints that universals are real entities and they exist independently of particulars, Aristotelian realism on the other hand, suggests that universals are real entities, but their existence is dependent upon particulars that exemplify them (Price, 1953). A feature of philosophy has been deduced – though answers to philosophical questions may not be conclusive, the errors of a previous answer are usually avoided. Let us consider how the problem of universals and particulars comes anew in the Medieval era focusing on William of Ockham and St. Thomas Aquinas.

In the Medieval age, four issues occupied the scholastics: the debate on reason and faith, the existence of God, the exactness of religious language and the problem of universals and particulars (Fieser, 2012). The problem of universals became a subject worthy of contemplation by the scholastics thanks to Porphyry. It engaged the attention of scholastics like Boethius, Albert the Great, Duns Scotus. For William of Ockham who took a nominalist point of view. Nominalism as hinted earlier is a view held by “those who think you can account for universal terms without invoking universals either as real things out there in the world or as concepts in the mind...” (Moore & Bruder, 2011:87).

William of Ockham holds that universals are but products of abstract human thoughts. In his own words in his *Ordinatio*, he affirms: “I do hold this that no universal, unless perhaps it is universal by voluntary agreement, is something existing outside the soul in any way, but all that which is of its nature universally predicable of many is in the mind either subjectively or objectively, and that no universal is of the essence or quiddity of any given substance”. Ockham arrives at the conclusion after having examined the realist stance of his predecessors and discovered the loopholes therein. For him “universals are no things but names”. It is in this mould that his *Ockham's Razor*, gained prominence with the caveat that entities should not be multiplied beyond necessities. By this, Ockham meant that we should favour a theory with the simplest explanation and since the thoughts of the realists on the problem of universals attend to

abstract entities, Ockham calls for individuation and recognition of particulars. Here, we notice a shift away from the traditional approach to the subject by Plato and Aristotle. Ockham's thoughts however had several implications for Christian theology. To the Nominalists, the individuality of the objects of experience simply meant that *only individuality* exists in reality. The abolition of a real abstract structure to the world had a number of consequences for someone like Ockham. The omnipotence of God became absolute and unlimited, unrestricted by the mere abstractions of logic, so that God could even make *contradictions* real, which was inconceivable and horrifying to Aristotelians or Platonists. Similarly, no things had natures (essences) that made them intrinsically either good or evil. With this in mind, let us briefly consider another great apostle of Aristotelian realism – St. Thomas Aquinas.

Following Aristotle St. Thomas, criticized Plato: For there is no difference between Aristotle and Plato, except in this: that Plato asserted that the thing which is understood has actual being outside the soul in exactly the same way as the intellect understands it, that is, a something abstract and universal; but Aristotle asserted that the thing which is understood is outside the soul, but in another way, because it is understood in the abstract and has actual being in the concrete. (Aquinas, 1964:107). The implication of St. Thomas claim has been revealed by Anthony Kenny that:

If Plato was wrong, as Aquinas thought he was, then there is not, outside the mind, any such thing as human nature as such: there is only the human nature of individual beings such as Tom, Dick and Harry. But because the humanity of individuals is form embedded in matter, it is not something which can, as such, be the object of pure intellectual thought. To conceive the humanity of Tom, Dick or Harry, we need to call in aid the imagination." (Kenny, 1980:75)

This does not however mean that St. Thomas took rigidly to the thoughts of Aristotle. His rationalization of the problem led him to moderate realism. For him universals may be viewed in three ways: first, the universals before the thing existing in the mind of God; second, the universe in the thing, being the concrete individual essence of the individual thing, numerically distinct but alike in all members of a given species; and thirdly, the universal after the thing being the abstract universal concept in the mind.

So far, we may deduce that with the ‘deification of human wisdom’ (Oizerman, 1973:36) in the Medieval period, the problem of universals moved from the terrestrial to the celestial.

Self-Assessment Exercise

1. For William of Ockham “universals are no things but names” (a) True (b) False (c) Undetermined (d) None of these
2. “Barack Obama is a man.” In this proposition _____ is universal (a) Obama (b) Barack (c) Man (d) None of these

4.4 Summary

This study unit examined the nature of the problem of universals. The various schools of thought on universalism were explored. The realist account of the nature and place of the universals in relation to the particular objects that instantiate them. While it notes that the universals as entities can be distinguished from the objects that instantiate them, the issue of whether they; that is, the universals really exist remains quite problematic which is at the heart of the nominalism alternative defended by William of Ockham for example. There are different schools of thoughts that attempts to account for the nature of the universals and how they exist in relation to particular objects that instantiate them. The notion that philosophical problems are perennial has been given a teleological vindication here. This unit portrays how philosophical problems that engaged the attention of sages and scholars in the ancient period still persist with us though not in the same way it first occurred to the ancients. The problem of universals that began with Plato and Aristotle became one of the themes the medieval scholastics theorized about. It shows that at one period the problem was considered by pagans who have no idea of God before it occupied the minds of those who wanted to use it to justify the oneness and supremacy of God. In other words, philosophical problems in the perennial nature encounter humans irrespective of ethnic, periodic or religious affiliations. They challenge us to use our sense of reasoning. It is therefore not the opposite of the truth that though philosophical problems elude finality, they are progressive in nature, attracting attention in different manners from different unique individuals and philosophic traditions. This study unit shows that universals are real and these universals can be distinguished from the particular objects or acts that instantiate them. Various schools of thought are noted to have made attempts to account for the nature of the existence of the universals. For example, three schools emerged in the medieval period of philosophy. These three schools of thought are ultra or exaggerated realism, moderate realism and nominalism proposed by William of Ockham. In the modern

era of philosophy and still held within the empiricist tradition is the claim that universals do not exist outside of the particular objects or acts in which they inhere or are objectified.

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4.6 Possible Answers to SAE

1. (a); 2. (c)

UNIT 5 THE CONCEPTS OF NATURE, REALITY AND THOUGHT

- 5.1 Introduction
- 5.2 Intended Learning Outcomes
- 5.3 The Idea of Nature, Reality and Thought
- 5.4 Summary
- 5.5 References/Further Readings/Web Resources
- 5.6 Possible Answers to SAE

5.1 Introduction

In the history of philosophy, what constitutes nature, reality and the possibility of thought about these themes have been central to philosophers from the ancient era through to the contemporary times. In this study unit, the focus is to simply highlight some of the characterizations of what these scholars through history think of nature, reality and thought.

5.2 Intended Learning Outcomes

The objectives of the study include to:

- Highlight what the various scholars through history think and say of nature, reality and the possibility of thought;
- Help students have an overview of the thinking of philosophical forebears on these themes; and
- Stimulate in students the interest to rethink these ideas in their own ways at the same time paying critical attention to the history of these discourses.

5.3 The Idea of Nature, Reality and Thought

What is reality? What constitutes nature? What is the nature of thought? These are key questions at the centre of the philosophical storehouse of the contributions of various forebears in the course of the history of metaphysics and of course philosophy. While many observed that change was a fundamental nature of reality, in other words, all around them they observed things constantly undergoing changes, certain aspects that underlies nature was not itself experiencing the same constant changes which was of course of interest to the many who paid attention and made effort to account for the nature of the universe; that is, the world around them, nature or reality and whether it was possible to have knowledge of the basic stuff of the nature or the world around them.

During the pre-Socratic era, many of these thinkers who raised questions

and excited about their experiences came to the conclusion that nature or reality was real and unchanging. In the views of some this reality was one and appears in many ways or forms at different times. So for example, for Thales, this reality was water. For Anaximander it was the apeiron; the boundless while for Anaximenes, it was air. For Heraclitus and Parmenides, it was change and constant flux for the former and then being which is permanent and unchanging for the latter. With respect to these characterizations the question then became what and how do we account for the apparent change we experience all around the world. For Parmenides and even in Plato as well (in his theory of the world of forms/ideas), the world of ordinary life and experience is not being or reality and thus, unreal. It is mere appearance and illusion to think it is real. For access to these realms are divided into two; that of opinion or the senses through which we experience and encounter change and what appears to us to be undergoing change in and around the world whereas through the way or power of reason, we can have access to the world that is real and unchanging. And so, against this backdrop the distinction between valid logical reasoning and experience is foregrounded and founded. On the part of Aristotle there was a total rejection of the other world kind of view in Plato's metaphysics. What is real accordingly is not present in another world outside of the experiences and that the changing nature of the visible world must be a basic feature of nature. When we are able to discover what the real and basic constituents that make up the natural world then we can understand and account for the changing natural world.

According to Aja (1996: 21) every natural object is always undergoing change at the same time something remains the same in that object that undergoes changes. For him therefore, there are four causes which are key for us to understand and ascertain what really changes and yet able to still be itself. The material cause – what is it that changes? The efficient cause – what makes it change, what produces the alteration? The formal cause – what does it change to, what new form does it take or acquire? And finally, the final cause – for what purpose or reason does it change and in view of what goal does it change? The building blocks for understanding the Aristotelian system are two; form and matter constitutively make up objects in nature imbued with the potentials to become actualities in view of certain ends in view. All objects in the natural world apart from the Unmoved Mover as Aristotle called it is always undergoing change (i.e. changing its form to take on another form) and yet something remaining unchanging or permanent about it (matter) within the dynamics of potentialities turning into actualities in view of achieving the status of pure form (the teleological goal or final end) which it never really attains.

The medieval thinkers took on this system and interpreted the Unmoved Mover to be God reflective of various religious traditions. In the modern

era, philosophers had various views on reality, nature and thought. Descartes for example postulated three substances – God, mind and matter and ended up with a rather religious or theological image of nature that in fact threatened to weaken the two other forms or substances of mind and body in explaining the nature of reality. In response to the Cartesian metaphysical system, Hobbes agreed that the physical world is real and then worked out a thorough going mechanistic or materialistic system that did away with anything spiritual or religious. In fact, the mental world as pictured in the Cartesian world is in fact part and parcel of the material world within the Hobbesian metaphysical characterization of the nature of reality. The real world is composed of bodies. A body is that which having no dependence upon our thought is coincident or coextended with some part of space.

Nature or reality therefore was conceived as purely matter in motion and therefore there appears to be no difficulty in explaining the connection between what we think about and what is happening outside of us. On the part of Spinoza, reality is simply composed of one substance and its modifications which he called God or Nature with infinite number of attributes. This system is called Monism. It is only by two means that we know these attributes and these are: thought and extension.

Everything else that exists is just the extension or the mode of one or two of either of the two known attributes by which we know of this only one substance that exist and necessarily exists, which of course, is God or Nature. This notion of God in the metaphysical system of Spinoza is entirely different from the Christian idea of God given how Spinoza went on to characterize this God as impersonal, lacking in any ability to perform miracle and in fact, a natural being to be known and loved more through the study of physics and mathematics than through traditional religious practices as preached in Christianity, (Aja 1996: 36).

In Hegel, we find another intriguing attempt whereby reality or everything that exists in nature can be understood only in terms of the absolute or objective mind which is in the process of evolution throughout the history of the world. Though a complicated system the absolute or the objective mind through a process of dialectics that involves a thesis and antithesis to form a synthesis that in turn undergoes the same process of dialectics again until the absolute mind is able to attain perfect rationality and complete or total self-realization – the stage when complete thought and complete being will be one and the same thing.

Self-Assessment Exercise

1. For Spinoza, God and Nature are one and same (a) True (b) False (c) Undetermined (d) None of these
2. _____ was conceived as purely matter in motion and therefore there appears to be no difficulty in explaining the connection between what we think about and what is happening outside of us.

5.4 Summary

The foregoing study unit attempted an examination of the concepts of nature, reality and thought using the tool of history. It broadly itemized some of the thinking and characterization of what these concepts and themes mean by identifying philosophers who in the course of history made contributions to our understanding of these terms and concepts. It began by examining the pre-Socratic thinkers and their views and thoughts on nature and reality in terms of what fundamentally constitutes them through to the modern period of philosophy. The views and thoughts of some metaphysicians from the classical era through the medieval to the modern period of philosophy were identified and discussed. While the thoughts of thinkers in the Ancient period provided useful tools for a greater appreciation of our experiences of nature and what there is in nature generally, their thoughts and theories were taken over and reshaped or redressed to meet the religious flair of the thinking during the medieval period. These thoughts were further advanced by modern philosophers to the extent that quite a number of other problems emerged in the various systems that were defended by these scholars which have remained problematic ever since and these will continue to inspire further reflections for contemporary thinkers even in our time.

5.5 References and Further Readings/Web Resources

- Aja, E. (2001). *Metaphysics: An Introduction*. Enugu: Donze Press.
- Unah, J. I. (2010). *Metaphysics*. Lagos: University of Lagos Press.
- Onyeocha, I. M. (2009). *Introfil: A First Encounter with Philosophy* (Second edition). Washington D.C.: Council for Research and Values in Philosophy.
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5.6 Possible Answers to SAE

1. (a); 2. Nature or reality

End of Module Questions

1. _____ as a metaphysical system signifies the assertion of the existence of a reality independently of our thoughts or beliefs about it.
2. In the Medieval period, the problem of universals moved from the terrestrial to the celestial (a) True (b) False (c) Undetermined (d) None of these
3. _____ is contrasted primarily with realism which holds that reality is independent of the mind.
4. _____ gives the essence of the universe to something outside the universe with an independent existence of “thinking upon thinking”

MODULE 3 THE PROBLEM OF BEING

In this module our objective is simply to explicate on the nature of the problem of being as central to metaphysics. Our interrogation of this all important problem will enable the students to appreciate the centrality of the nature and problem of being. We shall therefore look at how in the course of the history of philosophy various thinkers have tried to grapple with the problem of being and the extent to which their various attempts succeeded or failed to account for a comprehensive solution to the problem of being. Students will also be encouraged and challenged to attempt providing a rational solution to this long standing problem in metaphysics. Within Aristotle's work, being as such or being-qua-being as part of the central problems in metaphysics remains an exciting project for philosophers. In fact, the interpretation of what exactly the notion of being Aristotle had in mind while describing the possibility of the science of being reflects one of the very nature of focus of general metaphysics as distinct from the understanding of being of specific thing, say living things etc. the concern therefore is to examine whether it is possible to inquire into the nature of being as such or the possibility of to be without reference to specific kind of thing. Here the contribution of Plato provides some insights into how to understand this concern about the possibility of having very abstract and general ideas into the nature of specific kinds of things. Here the idea is the Platonic discourses on the nature of forms or world of ideas, (Hamlyn 1984: 1-2).

UNIT 1 HISTORICAL EXPLORATION OF THE QUESTION OF BEING

Unit Structure

- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Intended Learning Outcomes
- 1.3 Being in the Classical Era
 - 1.3.1 Being in the Medieval Era
 - 1.3.2 Being in the Modern Period
 - 1.3.3 Being in the Contemporary Period
- 1.4 Summary
- 1.5 References/Further Reading/Web Resources
- 1.6 Possible Answers to SAE

1.1 Introduction

The question of the problem of being and the nature of being is one of the most intriguing questions in metaphysics because one of the main branches of metaphysics; that is, ontology concerns itself with the nature of being. In fact, the question, "What is being?" has remained one of the

intractable and preeminent concerns in the entire philosophical history right from the age of the pre-Socrates through to this day. It is the case partly because some other important philosophical or specifically metaphysical problems are centred on our understanding of being and how we characterize what being is. For example, the problem of appearance and reality is predicated on our understanding of how we conceptualise and understand being. Is being one or many? Is being static, real, unchanging or dynamic, unreal, and effervescent? For this module, our concern will be an attempt to characterize what is being, contrast it with the idea of non-being, present a history of the discourse and the various nuances of the discourse on the problem of being and its nature. We shall adopt Omoregbe's calibration for ease and brevity.

1.2 Intended Learning Outcomes

This study unit has the following objectives:

- To help students understand the centrality of being in metaphysics;
- To facilitate an understanding of what is being;
- To facilitate an understanding of what is non-being; and
- To show the historical character of the discourse on being as a central theme in metaphysics.

1.3 Being in the Classical Era

According to Parmenides, being is whatever is. In other words, whatever exists is being. For him therefore, being is one, unchanging and eternal. With this calibration of what being is therefore, it can be asked what becomes of the things we experience around us that is constantly changing and passing. The simple answer then to the query is to simply suggest that these things do not and cannot constitute being since they do experience and undergo constant change, transient and of course they are many as we do see around us and in our environment. Central to this characterization of Parmenidean notion of being is the classic distinction between appearance and reality. Accordingly, being is one and reality is one and not many or transient. Thus, whatever that changes or is transient is non-being. The human senses through which we perceive the world around us is prone to error and capable of deceiving us, hence what we experience to undergo change in and around us is appearance and not reality; for it is only through the powers of reason that we can access reality which is unchanging and not transient.

The contribution of Plato to this debate is also along this same thought pattern of Parmenides. For Plato, the things we experience and perceive around us in this world are unreal, changing and multiple which only do reflect or imitate what are real and unchanging that only exist in the world

of Forms/Ideas accessible through the intellect/reason. However, the ultimate form of all forms is Goodness. On the part of Aristotle, he identified being, in fact, pure being as the object of metaphysics; that is, being as being or being as such. Within this conceptualization of the perfect being as the subject matter of metaphysics, metaphysics becomes the science of pure being, theology in some sense.

1.3.1 Being in the Medieval Context

The medieval context introduced the notion of Supreme Being into the equation by making the origin of the universe and created order the central themes for philosophical reflection. In this regard therefore, Thomas Aquinas replaced the notion of the Being as Being with God. The notion of being as used in the medieval context divides into two: the analogical and the univocal senses. While Being according to Aquinas is strictly used for God alone and all other created things as being in the analogical sense, Don Scotus opined that there is just only one sense in which we can understand and use the idea of being and it is same for God or created beings – humans for example.

1.3.2 Being in The Modern period

In the Hegelian system of the notion of thesis and anti-thesis dialectics, being is contrasted with non-being with becoming as the resultant synthesis. One scholar whose attention and focus majorly dwelt on being was Martin Heidegger. In his work, two categories of being are distinguished; being itself and individual beings. The former being itself or being of being is the source of other beings; that is, of individual beings and in which being itself manifests itself. Another existentialist who took a radical turn away from any mystical or religious line of thought was Jean-Paul Sartre for whom, being is what is. However, there are two notions; being in itself and being for itself. Whereas the former is conscious the latter is unconscious. The foundation of being is nothingness, for it emerges from nothingness. Being by its very nature is merely contingent.

1.3.3 Being in the Contemporary Thinking

Being is considered anything that exists materially or immaterially and so it remains the project and focus of ontology today to explain the nature of what there is in reality. Much of the discussions and debates about the problem of being in contemporary thinking therefore branches into the various special sciences today. And so there is a significant interest shown by metaphysicians in the works of cosmologists, astrophysicists and other related sciences seeking to understand and explain the nature of all that there is in existence.

Self-Assessment Exercise

1. The _____ introduced the notion of Supreme Being into the equation by making the origin of the universe and created order the central themes for philosophical reflection.
2. In the Pre-Socratic era, the _____ notion of being is the classic distinction between appearance and reality.

1.4 Summary

This study unit has outlined the debates and views on the nature and problem of being in metaphysics. It noted that being is the subject matter of ontology. Being in this context is in the most general and universal sense of it. Hence, Ontology as the study of being as being, of first principles and causes of the divine. Unlike other disciplines that concern themselves with parts, the concern of ontology as metaphysics is about absolutely everything, not in every details but only those matters which all things share. The problem of being is central in metaphysics. In fact, the special concern of ontology but of general interest no doubt to many areas of study in the contemporary era to account for the nature of what there is; materially or immaterially which has continued to attend to the interests of those in metaphysics as well as other special sciences. We have examined the historical moments from the classical era, medieval period, modern periods to this day how this central theme and problem in philosophy continue to intrigue philosophers and ordinary people on what the nature of being and non being is. In this unit, we have been able to look at how the question of being had commanded the attention of scholars. We have seen how they discussed being from the pre-Socratic/classical era down to the contemporary era.

1.5 References/Further Reading/Web Resources

- Aja, E. (2001). *Metaphysics: An Introduction*. Enugu: Donze Press.
- Unah, J. I. (2010). *Metaphysics*. Lagos: University of Lagos Press.
- Iroegbu, P. (1996). *Metaphysics: The Kpim of Philosophy*. Owerri: International Universities Press Ltd.
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- Omogbe, J. (1996). *Metaphysics Without Tears: a Systematic and Historical Study*. Lagos: Joja Educational Research and Publishers

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1.6 Possible Answers to SAE

1. medieval context; 2. Parmenidean

UNIT 2 THE GOD QUESTION IN METAPHYSICS

- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Intended Learning Outcomes
- 2.3 Grounds for God's Existence
 - 2.3.1 Some Concepts on the Nature of God
- 2.4 Summary
- 2.5 References/Further Reading/Web Resources
- 2.6 Possible Answers to SAE

2.1 Introduction

The central theme of the present unit is God. The question of the nature of God is an important one in philosophy. What type of reality is God? Is he a concrete or historical or abstract being? In this unit the arguments rather than what are generally termed proofs will be explored. Also, a few counter arguments that seek to undermine the arguments for God's existence will also be highlighted as evaluations of the arguments for God's existence. The focus here is to expose the arguments for and against God's existence. The essence of the present unit therefore is to further establish the centrality of God as an important aspect of metaphysical undertaking not only in history but even in the contemporary time. In fact, as it will be made clear shortly, the God question is also crucial for the broad context within which various systems and theories (religious and non-religious) attempt to explain the origin, meaning and nature of the universe. A classic representation of this is the seemingly unending debate between creationists and evolutionary thinkers on the origin of the universe.

2.2 Intended Learning Outcomes

For the students, the following are the objectives of the study:

- To understand the ubiquitous nature of the God question in metaphysics;
- To appreciate the strength and weaknesses of the various arguments for and against God's existence;
- To be able to attempt some personal and profound reflection on this all important theme and question; and
- To estimate the theoretical as well as practical implications of these discourses. For example, how to grapple with the presence of evil in a world created by a supremely good and all powerful God.

2.3 Grounds for the Existence of God

The theme “God” is a ubiquitous one within and outside metaphysics. In the history of philosophical thinking, many scholars down the ages have also attended to this theme. In terms of the questions regarding the existence of the being of God; there are numerous claims and counter claims which we may not exhaustively be able to handle in this present unit. Thus, the attempt here seeks to provide general and broad picture that introduces students to the various nuances that there are on this topic. This is because the concern here is the metaphysical relevance of the concept as God is also central in the discipline of theology and the various religions there are. In a sense one can broadly divide the various positions into three groups; the first group is made up of those who argue and affirm God’s existence generally termed “Theism”. Those who defend this view are called theists. The second group argues against the existence of God and so largely denies God’s existence, generally termed “Atheism”. Those who hold this view are called atheists. The third group is rather in between as they are rather indifferent and hold the view that we cannot know whether or not God exists. The last group is often regarded as “Agnosticism”. Those who hold this view are called agnostics.

The question however remains if the concept God can really be defined at all. Writing on this subject, Iroegbu (1995: 85) reports that God is understood as “a supreme personal being – distinct from the world and creator of the world”. This was the point of departure of the 1948 debate between Bertrand Russell and Fr. Fredrick Copleston on U.S. Television on the theme of the existence of God. In various cultures and religious worldviews, God is variously defined or characterized with attributes and these representations or descriptions can be found in a number of different stages. However, the most important attributes of the theistic concept of God are his transcendence and personality, Onyechoa (2009: 305-306).

There are two main sources of the knowledge of God: revealed theology or divine revelation; that is, the Holy Books for instance and natural reason or intellect. While the former constitutes theology the latter is natural theology or theodicy. This is key in the context of the intractable problem of evil or suffering in the world.

Arguments for the Existence of God: According to Onyechoa (308) the arguments for God’s existence can be broadly grouped under two types; namely, *a posteriori* and *a priori* arguments. *A posteriori* arguments are based on experience while *a priori* are based on reason and independent of experience. The cosmological and teleological arguments fall under the *a posteriori* form while the ontological and moral arguments fall under the *a priori* form. Let us now try to elucidate and provide brief details of the formulations of these arguments.

The Cosmological Arguments: though first developed by Aristotle, a pagan philosopher during the classical period but were later christianised by Thomas Aquinas in the Medieval era. They are the five ways Aquinas argues for the existence of God.

From Motion: the observation of the universe there is a chain of motions. Whatever that is in motion was moved by something else that precedes it. To avoid infinite regress, it is taken for granted that there is a first mover, an unmoved mover who is in itself unmoved but responsible for the movement of every other thing in motion. This first unmoved mover is said to be God.

From Efficient Cause: whatever is cause is caused by another. Nothing can be an efficient cause of itself, otherwise it would be prior to itself which is impossible. For the thing which causes another must exist before the caused in order to cause it, Iroegbu (1995: 97). Again, to avoid infinite regress, the first efficient cause which is responsible for all other causes but itself uncaused is conceived as God.

From Contingent to Necessary Being: there is ephemerality that characterizes the beings of our experience in the world. A being is here today and tomorrow the being is no more. In other words, things come and they go out of existence or die as the cause may be. Thus, the quality of existence of such beings is contingent; they are not necessary as they can stop existing. What accounts for the existence of things; i.e. contingent beings must itself be unaffected by contingency of existence, hence, necessary being must exist to give existence to all other realities that only have possible or contingent existence. The being that exists necessarily is conceived as God.

Degrees of Perfection: in the universe we observe that one thing is better than another, and later we find another thing better than the first one. If we were to trace these grades of perfection we would eventually arrive at the most perfect being, the ultimate source of perfection. The most perfect being is God, Omoregbe (1996: 51).

Order and Harmony: another term for this argument is that of design or teleological argument. In the universe, there is apparent order and purpose by which events, seasons, and other phenomena occur or the mechanisms through which organisms behave in a patterned and arranged fashion. This sort of order and careful arrangement cannot just be as a result of the activity of chance but a product and manifestation of an intelligent, careful planner who programmed the universe to operate the way it does. This teleological argument according to William Paley is akin to the working of the wall clock which works in an orderly fashion.

Though we do not physically see the intelligent designer at work, deductively, we must conclude that the intelligent designer exists. How else could one account for the intelligent, ordered and perfective functions present in the universe? An intelligent designer responsible for the order and harmony in the universe Aquinas regards as God.

The Ontological Model of Argument for God's Existence

Another model of argument for God's existence is the ontological argument defended by Rene Descartes and St. Anselm of Canterbury. The thrust of the ontological argument is concerning the very meaning and implication of the concept God. According to Iroegbu (1995: 99), the ontological model goes outside of experience and seeks to show the reality of God from our very understanding of what God is by definition, nature and conception. By explicative logical coherence, it shows that we cannot existentially deny what we essentially affirm by saying that God is the greatest reality, the perfect being, non-contradictory absolute.

For St. Anselm, God is the greatest object possible in thought that exists in reality as well if not God cannot be said to be the greatest conceivable being. In this formulation, there seems to be a logical jump from the very idea of God to the reality of God. Does it then follow that for everything one is able to conceive of comes into existence or does exist? For example, if I can conceive a flying horse or unicorn does not make these things to exist in reality. As a result of this kind of challenge, Descartes appeals to mathematics and uses the concept of a triangle to escape the logical jump in St. Anselm's formulation. Accordingly, "we all conceive of God as an absolutely perfect being. If he is perfect, he cannot lack one of the attributes of perfection, that of existence. If he did not exist, he would not be perfect. To avoid contradiction, since he is perfect, he necessarily exists", therefore, God exists, (Iroegbu 1995: 100).

Argument from Morality

According to Immanuel Kant, morality presupposes the existence of God. "Human moral experience witnesses a consciousness of moral duty. Duty is an internal imperative of doing good and avoiding evil. This is a natural datum founded on an internal logic of a moral law giver in human's interior self. It is a dictate of practical reason characterized by duties and responsibilities for the good of all", (Iroegbu 94). For morality only makes sense if there is a God who not only impresses the moral law on the consciousness of all humans but also rewards each accordingly. Through this moral law therefore God is able to regulate and control the behavior of humans. The obvious challenge is there are those who do not believe in God yet follow strictly the moral law. This makes it possible to then consider the possibility that belief in God or religious affiliation is not a

necessary condition for any adherence to moral duty though it may enhance it.

Arguments against God's Existence

Many scholars deny the existence for God for various grounds. One of the most prominent figures is Friedrich Nietzsche who is popularly known to have said that God is dead. This means that for him, God was or existed but is no more! Within his thought system, man now has assumed the place of God and poised to become the super – power. David Hume is another who argues against God's existence given the radicalization of empiricism that he championed. Others include thinkers who belong to Logical positivism who denied God and in fact all other metaphysical reality since they fail to satisfy the criterion of meaning or verification set by them.

One other classic argument against God's existence is the claim that God is hidden otherwise termed, divine hiddenness. It is a view formulated along the line that God has failed to present itself and openly be scrutinized in order to prove its existence and disprove the claims of the skeptics or atheists. For God's existence is by no means a sufficiently clear aspect of reality. The various arguments of non-beliefs are in fact proves or evidence for the non-existence of God.

It is important to point that beyond some of the few points above, there are counter arguments for each of the five ways of Aquinas discussed in the foregoing. For example, as criticism of the argument from order and harmony that underlie the universe, it is argued that chaos is also very much present in the universe. Earthquakes, floods, and natural disasters or physical evils that cause suffering and pain cannot be said to be wholly accounted for in any persuasive and convincing way in that order and harmony model. Added to this is the view that the argument from degrees perfection does not demonstrate that all perfections are ultimately embodied in only one being as the only source of all perfections.

2.3.1 Some Concepts on the Nature of God

It is worth pointing briefly are some terms that are associated with theistic thinking. Some of these terms have been defined by Iroegbu (1995: 90) and they include; pantheism, monotheism, polytheism, panentheism, deism and fideism amongst others.

Pantheism is associated with Baruch Spinoza who identified God with nature. Thus, natural things are expressions of divine being and activity. Hence, the classic remark of his, God or Nature.

Monotheism is the belief in one and indivisible God.

Polytheism is the idea that there are more than one God; some sort of pluralistic notion of God that make God more than one.

Panentheism is a species of pantheism, accepts God's existence, but relates him reciprocally to creatures. Everything is hooked in God and God is hooked on everything. Proponents of this include; F. Kranse and Alfred North Whitehead.

Deism is the view that God exists but he has no more sustaining influence nor does he again care for what is happening to the world he originally created.

Fideism is the view that God exists and does intervene in history and the truths of the Christian religion are acceptable only by faith and not reason.

Self-Assessment Exercise

1. _____ is the view that God exists but he has no more sustaining influence nor does he again care for what is happening to the world he originally created
2. The _____ model for God's Existence goes outside of experience and seeks to show the reality of God from our very understanding of what God is by definition, nature and conception.

2.4 Summary

The concept of God was the central concern of the unit. The unit examined the centrality of the God question in metaphysics. It examined the arguments for the existence of God and some few arguments against the existence of God. It broadly divided the arguments into the *a porteriori* model (made up of the cosmological and teleological arguments) and the *a priori* model (made up of the ontological and moral arguments for God's existence) of argument for God's existence. The unit also highlighted some of the weaknesses of some of the cosmological arguments as promoted by St Thomas Aquinas. The weakness of the teleological argument was also highlighted. The unit also mentioned some of the thinkers and schools of thought that argue against the existence of God. Some important topics associated with the theme of God were also defined following Iroegbu's characterization. The unit examined the ubiquitous concept of God in metaphysics. It presented the arguments for and against the existence of God as contained in the literatures. Particularly the unit examined the cosmological arguments, the teleological, and the

ontological and moral arguments for the existence of God. Some arguments against the existence of God were also discussed. Some major concepts were then further clarified as a way of improving the understanding some philosophical jargons associated with the theme of God.

2.5 References/Further Reading/Web Resources

Iroegbu, P. (1995). *Metaphysics: The Kpim of Philosophy*. Owerri: International Universities Press Ltd.

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2.6 Possible Answers to SAE

1. Deism; 2. Ontological

UNIT 3 A SHORT DISCOURSE ON HUMAN NATURE

- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Intended Learning Outcomes
- 3.3 Religious and Philosophical View of Human Nature
- 3.4 Summary
- 3.5 References/Further Reading/Web Resources
- 3.6 Possible Answers to SAE

3.1 Introduction

At the end of the study of this module students should be able to conceptualise and discuss the arguments for and against the existence of God. Also students should be able to discuss the metaphysical character of human nature which sets it apart from the other aspects of nature. Hence, for this module made of three units; we will examine the primacy of the God question in metaphysics. The concepts and nature of the problem of mind, body and self-identity broadly construed. We do not pretend to exhaustively tease out all of the details on the subject matter of philosophy of religion and philosophy of mind as sub-fields in philosophy for that matter. None the less, it is key to broach on these themes and related discourses we encounter not only in metaphysics but in all other aspects of philosophy which of course do go to show how interconnected these topics and problems are in philosophy. What are the arguments for and against God's existence? What is the human person? What is the nature of human nature? How different is the human person from other animals? How does the human person self-identify? Is the human nature fundamentally the same across cultures and societies? What are its qualities or properties, if there is any at all? Is the human person just a bundle or exclusively mere collection of physical/material or biological properties? Are there supra-physical qualities associated with only the human person? These are some of the questions crucial to our understanding of the nature of the human person and the place of the human person in the world in which the human person lives. It is against this backdrop that we shall endeavor to examine the concepts of human nature, the mind-body problem while examining the various theories associated with them, albeit brief. The central concern is to provide a brief insight into what human nature is and show the historical development of the understanding of what human nature or human person generally is in the course of the history of philosophy. In other words, the focus is to examine what is it or what those qualities are or features that make a being a human person.

3.2 Intended Learning Outcomes

The following are the objectives of the study for the students:

- To understand what human is;
- To appreciate the development of the concept in the history of metaphysics; and
- To be able to outline some defining features of human nature as peculiarly different from the other aspects of nature.

3.3 Religious and Philosophical View of Human Nature

Three broad images of the human nature are manifest in the literatures. These include; the classical or rationalistic inherited from Ancient Greece and Rome; the Judeo-Christian view and the naturalistic or biological view.

The classical thinking as regards the notion of the human person is that provided in the work of Boethius which is that the human person is an individual substance of a rational nature. The quality of rationality simply means a self-reflective consciousness. Plato considered reason as the highest part of the soul and so it is reason's primary task to guide conduct. Aristotle also considered reason as the highest faculty of the soul, and the distinguishing faculty that sets the human person apart from the other parts of nature. This foregrounds the Cartesian notion of the thinking self that is not only conscious of the fact that he entertains doubt but that he was in fact conscious of his doubting self-encapsulated in his classic formula, "Cogito ergo sum" (I think therefore I am). In developing this argument of the human person, Omoregbe (38) outlines six features that make a person to include: rationality, freedom, morality, sociality, interpersonal relationship, and individuality. In other words, for one to be considered a human person, he or she must be a rational being, a moral being, a social being, a free being, a being capable of interpersonal relationship and an individual being. These fundamental features outlined above do really distinguish the human person from all other beings in nature.

Another important feature of the human person is the effort to clarify and understand what makes up the human person and the implications of such characterization. In the Cartesian system for instance, the human person is seen to be made of two entities or substances: thought and matter otherwise referred to as mind and body. Whereas the mind is a mental or immaterial substance which is capable of thinking while the body is an extension of matter which is a material substance. These two entities are interconnected in the human person within which they affect and influence each other in some ways. The very exact nature of the

relationship between the two different substances; one immaterial and the other material has remained problematic for scholars over the years since the time of Descartes who first characterized the problematic in a very interesting manner.

The Judeo-Christian viewpoint suggests that the human person is considered as the image of God and a special creature different from the parts of the created order. Infact, the human person is seen as a finite being as well as a being that has some spiritual connections as well. While it is part of the created order and thus affected by the weaknesses and limitations of the earth or worldly affairs, it has the capacity to transcend same when it is able to devote itself to the highest values and practice – God. This theological and religious view reads meaning and purpose in the created order. Humans are ends in themselves and should not be used as means to an end. It also views the human person as a moral being who is morally responsible, (Onyeocha 2009: 211).

The Naturalistic or scientific viewpoint on human nature suggests that the human nature as part of the larger physical universe under the operations of natural laws and principles. The fundamental role of cells and its other small elements are a key to understanding the human person in relation to the larger universe that follows the evolutionary processes and activities.

In the various **philosophical traditions** the make-up of the human person vary from the popular notions in the western philosophical tradition. Whereas the human person is seen to be made of two substances as it in the Cartesian system seen in the foregoing, the mode of thinking and philosophical underpinnings in various cultures may have different account with implications for how the human person is perceived and understood.

For example, in much of African philosophical thinking, the accounts of the person provided are sometimes dualistic (the body and the spirit/soul) whereas some others present tripartite framework involving three entities to involve the body, the soul and the spirit. Little wonder, Gyekye (1998: 65) opines that in Akan metaphysics of the person and of the world in general, all this seems to imply that a human being is not just an assemblage of flesh and bone, that he or she, a complex being who cannot completely be explained by the same laws of physics used to explain inanimate things and that our world cannot simply be reduced to physics. The idea here is that the conception of the human person or the nature of the human nature is a very important one and interests in telling the narrative of what and how it is remains central not only among scholars but also individuals across societies.

Self-Assessment Exercise

1. _____viewpoint on human nature suggests that the human nature as part of the larger physical universe under the operations of natural laws and principles.
2. For Descartes, whereas the mind is a mental or immaterial substance which is capable of thinking while the body is an extension of matter which is a material substance (a) True (b) False (c) Undetermined (d) None of these

3.4 Summary

This study unit has explored the question of what human nature is and what sets it apart from the other parts of nature or the universe. Three fundamental broad theories were highlighted. These theories include: the rationalistic or classical view, the Judeo-Christian model and the Naturalistic or scientific view of human nature. If materialism (the thinking that all that there is in nature or the universe is wholly matter and there is nothing extra to it; that is, mental aspect for instance) is true then there is nothing unique about human nature that is constitutively part of that nature/universe. However, as the study unit shows, there is more to matter in nature. As demonstrated in the foregoing discussion, human nature though as part of the universe is peculiar and the peculiarities have been assessed. In fact, the effort to investigate and discuss what reality really means for the human person itself is an indication that such beings involved in the endeavours are conscious. An aspect of human nature that cannot be wholly accounted for within the mechanistic or scientific model of explanation alone and in fact does constitute a basis to draw a line between such beings and the rest of the universe/nature. While one may not be able to exhaustively and convincingly argue that one position is ultimately the correct version of the problem at hand, at least some robust familiarity with the various nuances make the exercise worthwhile and philosophically rewarding.

3.5 References/Further Reading/Web Resources

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3.6 Possible Answers to SAE

1. The Naturalistic or scientific; 2. (a)

UNIT 4 ON THE PROBLEM OF MIND AND BODY

- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 Intended Learning Outcomes
- 4.3 Theories on Mind-Body Interaction
 - 4.3.1 Mind According to Emerging Evolution
- 4.4 Summary
- 4.5 References/Further Reading/Web Resources
- 4.6 Possible Answers to SAE

4.1 Introduction

The mind-body problem remains one of the perennial problems in philosophy as it has not only attended the interest of many philosophers through the ages but has defied final resolution also. Ever since the time of Rene Descartes it has remained very central to philosophy. More importantly the encroachment and resolution of many problems by the sciences and its advances to understanding and explaining all that there is in terms of matter and quantifiable and measurable terms have made this problem central and important.

4.2 Intended Learning Outcomes

The Intended Learning Outcomes or objectives of the study for students for this unit include:

- To be able to understand the main thrust of the problem of mind and body;
- To have an overview of the historical perspective to efforts in resolving it; and
- To stimulate reflections on the various theories there are in an effort to resolve the problem of mind and body drawing on inspirations of earlier thinkers.

4.3 Theories on Mind-Body Interaction

The mind-body problem is an attempt to understand the relationship between mental phenomena and the bodily basis of those phenomena. It is exceedingly hard to account for these; hence, it is a problem. The effort to understand and explain how these two distinct parts actually do relate has generated a lot of theories and debates. The classic distinction noted by Descartes point to some other issues that have remained problematic in accounting for the nature of relationship between mind and matter. Which of the two is more fundamental and how do they operate in a human person? What is the nature of each and their features? How do these two distinct and essentially different features really relate, if they do and where

does this take place? What is the nature of influence and effect that each exact on the other? These are some of the questions that have divided experts in many fields. While some are of the view that mind is the fundamental nature of reality directing activities of the body. This is a claim held by materialists such as Gilbert Ryle that mind or consciousness is epiphenomenon – that is, accidental by-product of matter.

There are numerous theories defended by experts in various fields in philosophy and science. The focus here is not to highlight and engage all of these theories but to point out some that we think are the popular and major ones with a view of stimulating further reflections among students on this problem. We shall adopt the categorization of theories in the explication of this problem in Aja (1996: 142-147) because it provides very detailed as well as comprehensive summary of the main points of the various theories in ways you do not find in the texts available to me. The list includes the following:

Interactionism: The Cartesian formulation of the problem aptly captures the central thesis of this theory which suggests that though of distinct nature with different essential attributes, they however exact influences on one another – in other words, they interact. Descartes went ahead to identify a part of the brain called the pineal gland as the seat of the soul or the mind wherein this interaction takes place. Such a view did not account for why there is interaction between the two distinct substances and the location of a place within the brain where the interaction takes place was an overreach on the part of Descartes. It is key to note that the double aspect theory of body and mind proposed by Spinoza is not the same thing with the view of Descartes and does not say much as regards interaction between both given that mind and body (the mental and the physical aspects) are conceived of as two sides of a single substance.

Occasionalism: This theory was suggested by Malebranche and according to him, on the occasion of bodily stimuli or impressions, God create the appropriate idea and response in the mind.

Parallelism: In the thought of Gottfried Leibniz, there is a parallel between the mental phenomena and the physical phenomena and there is not any form of causal relations between the two phenomena. Mental processes and physical processes are equally real, they are not causally related; they merely accompany each other in time.

Identity Theory: The theory simply holds that every mental item can be identified with some physical item. Though there are several refinements and reformulation of this theory the end goal is simply a targeted effort to totally eliminate the mental dimension from within our understanding of the phenomenon.

Epiphenomenalism and the denial of mind: It is a theory that suggests a one dimensional mode of interaction whereby the physical phenomena produces the mental features that are noticed and never in the reverse order/vice versa. This view also suggests that the mind is merely a bodily function. Aristotle, Hegel, Hobbes and other behaviourists such as Thomas Huxley endorse this theory.

Psychical Monism and the denial of matter: This theory suggests the primacy of the mental over matter. Thus, the body is considered as mental appearance to such an extent that causal series is confined to the mental realm alone and so what we think or regard as matter is a shadow cast by thought. Matter is merely an appearance such that the body is an externalization of mind. Leibniz, Berkeley, Schopenhauer are its proponents.

Dualism: This doctrine is opposed to monism (only one fundamental kind of state in our universe) that there are two fundamental kinds of states in the universe, mental states and material states that are thoroughly distinct and totally separable from each other. Mind and matter are considered to be equally fundamental, entirely independent and mutually irreducible. Descartes and Leibniz are proponents of the dualist view. There are different versions of the dualistic account of the mind and body problem. For example, dualistic interactionism as described in the foregoing part of this section which involves a 2 way interactionism – causation goes both ways; from the mental to the material and vice versa. The Cartesian view is representative of this model of dualism. The others are: the one-way model of epiphenomenalism and then the no-way model of parallelism, (Carroll &Markosian 2010: 135-136).

4.3.1 Mind according to Emerging Evolution

This theory holds that there is no dualism, no interaction and no extreme denial. Matter is real and mind is real. Mind however has new features of its own that cannot be adequately interpreted with reference to the standards of previous levels. The self is considered as the living individual with its needs and interests and capacities for feeling, thinking, and creative imagination. The self is not the mind. The self is the living being who carries on these mental processes, (Aja 1996: 147).

Some other thinkers have suggested that the problem is what it is because of the linguistic and conceptual confusion that have been associated with the formulation of the mind and body problem. The view is held by Gilbert Ryle, a contemporary British philosopher who accused Descartes and others of being guilty of what he calls *category mistake*. Category Mistake is committed when a concept is treated as if it belonged to one system or

category of ideas when, in fact, it belongs to another. He thus, dismissed the idea of the mind by ridiculing it in terms of a ghost in a machine – where ghost represents the mind and the machine for the body, (Onyeocha 2009: 328).

Self-Assessment Exercise

1. _____ is a theory that suggests a one dimensional mode of interaction whereby the physical phenomena produces the mental features that are noticed and never in the reverse order/vice versa
2. _____ holds that there are two fundamental kinds of states in the universe, mental states and material states that are thoroughly distinct and totally separable from each other.

4.4 Summary

This study unit has examined the mind and body problem that became philosophically engaging right from the time of Rene Descartes. The problem continues to be of interest to philosophers as well as other experts to account for the nature of the relationship there is between mental processes and the bodily extended self or properties as distinct substances. The study unit exposed the various nuances of the attempts that have been proposed to resolve the intractable problem. It identified various theories and described their main thrust. The nature of the relationship between the mind and body was the central theme of the study unit. The intriguing nature of the problem and how intractable the problem has been in philosophy was highlighted. Different theories as attempts to clarify the very nature of the relationship between the two distinct yet connected entities in the human person. From those that proposed two distinct entities causally involved and interactive, from extremes that deny one at the expense of the other to moderate view were all highlighted.

4.5 References/Further Reading/Web Resources

- Aja, E. (1994). *What is Philosophy? An African Inquiry*. Enugu: Donze Press.
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4.6 Possible Answers to SAE

1. Epiphenomenalism;
2. Dualism

UNIT 5 NOTION OF SUBSTANCE (MONISM VS PLUARISM)

- 5.1 Introduction
- 5.2 Intended Learning Outcomes
- 5.3 A Brief Historical Discourse on Substance
- 5.4 Summary
- 5.5 References/Further Reading/Web Resources
- 5.6 Possible Answers to SAE

5.1 Introduction

In the history of metaphysics, one of the main points of disagreement between Baruch Spinoza and Wilhelm Leibnitz is the nature of the underlying reality which reason tells us to be so, whatever the senses tell us. In other words: what is the nature of substances? Must there be only one of these or many, and if the latter, how many? For this study unit, we set out to examine the concept and place of substance in metaphysics or philosophy generally. What is the notion of substance about? Is substance necessary and how does one distinguish between one substance and the other? What are the traditional and modern theories of substance? It also attempts a philosophical excursion and discussion on substance in metaphysics in its various periods.

5.2 Intended Learning Outcomes

The main objectives of the study are:

- To underpin what the notion of substance connotes;
- To know the history of the debates surrounding the notion of substance; and
- To ascertain the various dimensions of what the notion means in metaphysics

5.3 A Brief Historical Discourse on Substance

The notion of substance is an important one in metaphysics that has continued to be of interest to philosophers. The ability to be able to sustain talk and belief in change and identity over time makes sense only when we appreciate what the concept of substance implicates/means. Whereas the Greek and Latin roots or etymology of the word substance may mean different things but whichever way one may conceive it, it is always in relation with the idea of being or beingness. From its Latin root, it means something standing beneath the properties. The Latin word, sub (under) stans (standing). While the Greek word for substance “ousia” means that which is fundamental. According to Iroegbu (1995: 49), substance is

contrasted with accident. The former exists in itself whereas the latter inheres or exists in the substance. The substance supports the accident in existence, underlies it.

For Aristotle, substance means particular things. For example, this man, this horse, used to refer to matter, a category. For him, there are primary and secondary substances, the latter being species or general instances of primary substances. Omoregbe (5) adds that “in Aristotle’s philosophy substance has two meanings. In the first sense, substance is whatever exists on its own while its opposite, accident, is whatever cannot exist on its own but can only inhere in other things”. A clear example of this can simply be gleaned when we look and consider colours, which is a clear case of understanding the difference between the contrast between the notion of substance and accidents. It is the case that colours do not exist on their own. Their existence is premised on something more fundamental in which particular colour exists or inheres.

For Locke, substance refers to that which underlies something or other which is supposed to give support to the properties that inhere in it. In describing this traditional doctrine of substances, particular substances are never predicated of anything else but everything else is predicated of them. This also constitute what Strawson calls the basic logical subjects.

Basic particulars are not only identifiable; they are re-identifiable. That is, they not only occupy space but do have a certain persistence through time, so they can be re-identified as the same thing as that which was. Aristotle puts the matter by saying that they are the only things that can remain the same while receiving contrary qualifications. They retain their identity through change. Substances therefore have a relative permanence; they do not have a merely instantaneous form of life. They have a form and matter and so substances are the building blocks of both material and immaterial reality as well. In this context, the contrast between substance and accident makes a lot of sense.

One important feature of substance is the idea of simplicity. In fact, simplicity is said to be an important feature of what constitute substance. The thesis that substances must be simple is integral to atomist theories as long as they hold that the atomicity or indivisibility of atoms is one of principle and not merely something that holds good in fact. Thus, the basicness of substance must itself entail its absolute simplicity. A clear example of this in the history of philosophy is the contribution of Leibniz with reference to his theory of monadology.

Monads are simple and basic entities from which all of nature is made of. They are simple in the way that the ego is; they are absolutely one yet capable of representing a plurality, as the ego does in its perception of

the world. This is a feature which is not exemplified in any material thing, so that the ultimate substances must for that reason, be immaterial.

In contemporary thinking, the advancement of science and its worldviews tend to give impression and plausibility to the view that the best way in which to speak and think about the world are not those of substance, identity and change, but for example, events and processes. A. N. Whitehead is an example in fact. For him, what we earlier thought to be substances are best conceptualised as aspects of processes. In fact, science does not sustain the conception of the world of persistent substance subject to change. The objects are rather ingredients into events; they are one might say, logical constructions out of events and processes, (Hamlyn 1984: 60-84).

The next point to then clarify is what happens and how are we able to tell the difference between one substance and another? Attempts to respond to this question are central to what medieval scholars refer to as the problem of the principle of individuation. Here connected with this problem therefore is the theme of identity and how to distinguish one thing from the other. While it is important to note that this problem though important should not detract from the fact that the notion of substance here defended is one which constitute the specific nature of a thing and thus synonymous with essence or nature. It is in virtue of which a thing is what it is, as distinct from other things or from its qualities.

Self-Assessment Exercise

1. According to _____, substance refers to that which underlies something or other which is supposed to give support to the properties that inhere in it.
2. In the opinion of _____, monads are simple and basic entities from which all of nature is made of.

5.4 Summary

The foregoing unit treated the notion of substance, meaning and its distinctive nature character. In the process it provided a historical assessment of the notion of substance by tracing the etymology of the word both in Latin and Greek to underscore the fact that substance can simply be contrasted with accident. Substance was considered to be that which is fundamental or the basic principle, supporting being and primary reality under which accidents inhere or lie. This study unit examined one of the problems in metaphysics – substance and its nature. It provided insights into the historical and contemporary reflections on what the notion of substance connotes.

5.5 References/Further Reading/Web Resources

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5.6 Possible Answers to SAE

1. Locke; 2. Leibniz

End of Module Questions

1. In the _____ of the notion of thesis and anti-thesis dialectics, being is contrasted with non-being with becoming as the resultant synthesis
2. In the Medieval period, the problem of universals moved from the terrestrial to the celestial (a) True (b) False (c) Undetermined (d) None of these
3. One other classic argument against God's existence is the claim that God is hidden otherwise termed, _____.
4. _____ viewpoint suggests that the human person is considered as the image of God and a special creature different from the parts of the created order
5. _____ is committed when a concept is treated as if it belonged to one system or category of ideas when, in fact, it belongs to another.

MODULE 4 FREEWILL AND DETERMINISM

Freedom are of many types; from to do as one pleases and the absence of any constraints. For example, anyone in prison cannot be said to have the first sense of freedom to do as much as one pleases. One of the very often quoted line from Jean Jacques Roseau is “man is born free but he is everywhere in chains”, to underscore the importance that is given to the concept of freedom. In fact, in many societies today, freedom is a popular term as it is always referred to as one of the pillars of civilization and political advancement whereby this notion of freedom is not only enshrined in the constitutions of states that guide societies and people but acclaimed to be what is fundamentally human against the backdrop of universal human rights calls. Despite the inalienable nature of its character in sociopolitical parlance, it is basically of metaphysical nature that is of interest to us in this study unit. It is against this backdrop that this module seeks to examine what is freedom and what the lack or absence of it means; that is, determinism.

UNIT 1 WHAT IS FREE WILL?

Unit structure

- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Intended Learning Outcomes
- 1.3 Freewill: A Conceptual Analysis
- 1.4 Summary
- 1.5 References/Further Reading/Web Resources
- 1.6 Possible Answers to SAE

1.1 Introduction

What is freedom is the question that this study unit seeks to answer. What are the types of freedom that there are and why is the notion of freedom metaphysically interesting? Is there any metaphysical basis for the notion of freedom? If yes, what is it? If no, why? This will be the focus of this present study unit.

1.2 Intended Learning Outcomes

The objectives of this study unit for students are:

- To understand the meaning of freedom;
- To underscore the metaphysical basis of the notion of freedom; and
- To be able to explicate why the notion of freedom is problematic.

1.3 Freewill: A Conceptual Analysis

Freedom is one concept that is very often used but hardly there is unanimous and universal consensus as to what exactly it means. In some texts and defended by some authors are two ways to conceptualise freedom or tell what freedom is from what it is not. These two notions are; freedom to and freedom from. The two senses do not mean the same thing as we would see shortly. The former sense connotes the ability to do as one pleases which is of an internal kind. It is to use the positive sense of the word freedom. The second manner of use means absence of any constrain of any sort which may be an external kind of factor. This latter sense is to use the notion of freedom in the negative sense.

Freedom is used interchangeably with free will and it is used in relation to the nature of the human person in the universe. Thus, the understanding that one holds of the very nature of the universe; that includes, the origin and character of the universe defines how one approaches and understands the concept of freedom or freewill. Is freedom or freewill a matter of illusion or it is real in the sense that the human person has a unique place within the entire universe and does operate with capacities that are uniquely associated only with the human person. Freewill or freedom problem arises in the context of the question of moral responsibility. That is, whether it is morally responsible to hold the human person for his/her actions and inactions in the society. Thus, if it is the case that the human person is fundamentally free then it makes sense to hold the human person responsible for whatever actions carried out by the person. If it is the case that the human person is not free then such a person cannot be said to be morally responsible and so make no sense to be held accountable for such an action.

If freedom is true then determinism is false. And if determinism is true then freewill is false. In other words, both positions cannot be true at the same time and in the same context. However, there are ways in which these contraries can be reformulated and refined in order to accommodate both positions as we shall see when we study the problematic nature of the two together in one of our subsequent study units.

Sometimes questions are raised as to whether there is a limit to freedom (limited freedom) or there isn't any limit to it (absolute freedom). In the existentialist thinking of J.P. Sartre, the human person is accorded absolute freedom and so cannot but be fully and wholly responsible for the choices and decisions thereof. According to Iroegbu (1995: 255) the existential freedom defines his essence. The human person has creative power to escape the mechanical laws of nature and evolution. The progress of human creativity proves this his total freedom. My freedom is my whole being, my entire existence. The import of this for morality

therefore is that only one law operates: choose thyself! Choose thy values. Thus, in the exercise of his unlimited freedom, the human person makes his or her image which of course does have consequence in the sense that it involves anguish for one cannot shift the responsibility to others.

Self-Assessment Exercise

1. For _____, the human person is accorded absolute freedom and so cannot but be fully and wholly responsible for the choices and decisions thereof.
2. _____ is used interchangeably with free will and it is used in relation to the nature of the human person in the universe.

1.4 Summary

The notion of freedom was the subject matter of the study unit. Different types of freedom were identified and some few examples were given. The notion of moral freedom was problematized because that is the only sense or type of freedom that makes meaningful and metaphysically interesting the discourse on moral responsibility. The focus of this study unit was the idea of freedom and what it means. It examines why the notion of freedom is of philosophical or metaphysical interest. It particularly highlighted the fact that the type of freedom that makes our study metaphysically interesting is the notion of moral freedom because of its relevance for issues related to moral responsibility.

1.5 References/Further Reading/Web Resources

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1.6 Possible Answers to SAE

1. Sartre; 2. Freedom

UNIT 2 THE NATURE OF DETERMINISM

- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Intended Learning Outcomes
- 2.3 What is Determinism?
 - 2.2.1 Types of Determinism
 - 2.3.2 Spinoza's Version of Determinism
- 2.3 Summary
- 2.4 References/Further Reading/Web Resources
- 2.5 Possible Answers to SAE

2.1 Introduction

Determinism denies that there is freewill or freedom. The human person does not have free will to exercise in taking actions or making choices. There are different brands or variants of determinism that have been defended through the course of the history of philosophy. When the human person is said to be determined is to say that the human person lacks the capacity to exercise any form of freewill. In characterizing the human person, several factors and causes have been identified as limiting the capacity of the human person to be free in making choices. When the notion of determinism is stretched to its limits, it means that holding the human person morally responsible for his or her actions and decisions will be problematic. This unit will therefore attempt to clarify what the basic features of determinism are, its various forms given the various reasons advanced in defense of the claim and the position of the proponents that hold these views.

2.2 Intended Learning Outcomes

The unit will help students to:

- Underpin determinism;
- Understand the historical evolution of determinism; and
- Distinguish the various types of determinism and their proponents.

2.3 What is Determinism?

Determinism means the denial or rejection of freewill associated with the capacity of the human person to exercise freewill/freedom in any significant way in making decisions, choices or taking actions. It means that everything that happens is determined as everything has a cause. No wonder then Aja (1996: 154) states that it is a doctrine of universal causation. It says only that every event has a cause. It does not say whether the cause is mental or physical, whether it is inorganic nature or organism or people or God. As far as determinism is concerned the cause

can be anything. If determinism is true, then there is no freewill since the two positions cannot be true and false at the same time. Or better still, is there a way in which these apparent contrary positions can be reformed or revised to accommodate the possibility of both positions being true or false at the same time?

Extreme form of determinism is often regarded as fatalism. Fatalism is simply the view that whatever will be will be. In other words, human beings for example have no power to change the course of events. It does not deny that everything that happens has a cause. What it says in effect is simply that the future will be of certain nature regardless of what we do, and that therefore there is no point in our trying to do anything about it, (Aja 1996: 155). This position has a lot of implications for human persons and societies where such views are the prevailing worldviews. So for example, certain people can resign themselves to fate and eschew hard work and diligence that can sometimes impact on the prospects of the successes that one can attain or achieve. The point here is that the position of fatalism seems to be a pernicious view that ought to be done away with by all means necessary. If everything is caused, how can we avoid the problem of infinite regression in our quest to account for the series of causes responsible for causing series of events under query?

2.3.1 Types of Determinism

There are many types of determinism that have been identified by various scholars. Broadly two broad ways to look at the problem of determinism is the extent to which any position of determinism is able to accommodate and provide some space for moral responsibility. Such that when those who hold deterministic views make room for moral responsibility and accountability such a view is representative of soft version of determinism. On the other hand, any system that leaves no room at all within their deterministic views for moral responsibility, such extreme versions is generally hard determinism. We shall now examine different systems to see where each fall into whether soft or hard versions of determinism.

Following Omoregbe's (1996: 29) classification, the various types of determinism include; **ethical determinism** (human actions are determined by what they perceive as good. The role of knowledge is key for this form of determinism. According to some of its proponents, to include, Socrates and Plato, even those who do evil do it unknowingly. After all, evil is in the long term harmful to the doer.

Theological determinism is another type. For this form of determinism God has the foreknowledge of all actions and so it is very problematic to reconcile the fact of freedom of the human person and the knowledge of such action known by God prior to the action ever taking place. A deep assessment of the fact of God's foreknowledge of the future actions of humans does not conflict with the notion of freewill of the human person as defended by Augustine and others. There is however a problematic version of this type of determinism – predestination which holds that some persons have been so selected and specially chosen by God and endowed with grace with guaranteed salvation.

For the materialists who describe the operations of nature to be predicated on the principles or laws of nature, there is not so much room for human freedom because the human person as part and parcel of the physical universe are controlled by those laws. This form of determinism is called **physical determinism**. This form of determinism denies any extra-physical dimension of the human person given the mechanistic orientation at the foundation of materialism generally. There are however some problems associated with this kind of thinking about the human person considered to be entirely and wholly matter. Some of the thinkers who hold this materialistic notion of the world and of course of the human person include scholars like Thomas Hobbes and Baron Paul Von Holbach.

Another form or type of determinism is **psychological determinism** which holds that psychological factors such as motives and instincts determine human actions and so the human person cannot be said to be free if these factors are solely responsible in causing humans to act. David Hume, Sigmund Freud and Thomas Hobbes defend this form of determinism. The problem with the form of determinism is to think that for every action that has a cause and that cause in effect determines the action which does not necessarily follow. This is the case because as Omoregbe (1996: 34) puts it, “to say that an action is free does not mean that it has no cause. Every action indeed has a cause. But the cause of an action does not determine it. What determines one's action immediately is one's free choice, which is one's free decision.”

Finally, there is **historical determinism** which simply holds that history and the events in history are determined. Hegel is a strong proponent of this form of determinism. So for him, historical events are crucial parts, in fact inevitable moments of the dialectic process through which the absolute realizes self-development in view of attaining absolute rationality. Karl Marx is another thinker who holds a similar view of history but in this case production or economic forces are the prime determinants of historical process in view of the advancement or progress of society to the highest form of society – communism. The problem with

this form of determinism is that it denies the role and responsibility of humans in the affairs pertaining their lives and history.

In the modern era, especially in Kant we see that the experience of the human person on the moral plane makes a very strong case for the fact of human freedom. Thus, the attempt in metaphysics or any form of speculative reflection to resolve the problem of human freedom will yield little or no result. The human experience of regret or remorse and blame worthiness or praise worthiness following decisions or choices humans make or take as well as the very foundation of meaningfulness really of the various codes that operate in society are pointers to the fact that the human person is indeed free.

2.3.2 Spinoza's Version of Determinism

Spinoza (1987: Eld1) says “men are deceived in that they think themselves free [i.e., they think that, of their own free will, they can either do a thing or forbear doing it], an opinion which consists only in this, that they are conscious of their actions and ignorant of the causes by which they are determined.” He says “men are born ignorant of the causes of things” (Spinoza 1987: IApp)

In the mind there is no absolute or free will, but the mind is determined to this or that volition by a' cause, which is also determined by another cause, and this again by another, and so on *ad infinitum*. The mind is a certain and determinate mode of thought (Spinoza 1987: pt 2), and therefore it cannot be the free cause of its own actions, or have an absolute faculty of willing or not willing, but must be determined to this or that volition by a cause which is also determined by another cause, and this again by another, and so on *ad infinitum* (Spinoza 1987: pt 1).

In the same manner it is demonstrated that in the mind there exists no absolute faculty of understanding, desiring, loving, &c. These and the like faculties therefore, are either altogether fictitious, or else are nothing but metaphysical or universal entities, which we are in the habit of forming from individual cases. This is why Mathew Kisner (2011) has made a critical analysis.

Matthew Kisner in his book, *Spinoza on Human Freedom*, gives a critical assessment of Spinoza's doctrine of freedom. Kisner succeeds in bringing into full relief the complexity of Spinoza's view of moral agency, in which the agent cannot simply depend on reason to quell the passions or to dictate how to act, but must rely on the imagination and the passions to make dynamic, situated practical judgments.

Some of what Spinoza (1987) has to say about freedom in general seems to render human freedom impossible. Take, for instance, his notorious definition of freedom in the *Ethics*: "that thing is said to be free which exists solely from the necessity of its own nature, and is determined to action by itself alone" (Spinoza 1987: EID7). In Spinoza's terms, freedom requires that a thing be a fully adequate cause of its effect (Spinoza 1987: EIIID1). But even though these formulations seem to preclude human freedom, Spinoza consistently maintains that humans can be free, or adequate, causes.

Kisner (2011) attempts to square this circle by distinguishing between different senses of freedom. Absolute freedom, defined in Spinoza, applies only to God. Finite things can obtain only a *degree* of freedom. And when "degree freedom" sufficiently approximates absolute freedom -- crossing some undefined, and perhaps indeterminate, threshold -- we may abandon "degree" language and refer to it simply as human freedom, full stop. Kisner (2011: 42) offers a parallel account of adequate causation and adequate ideas: while human ideas cannot be fully adequate, they can be *sufficiently* adequate to "single them out as attaining some special, epistemic standard."

While Kisner's three-fold account of freedom reveals itself as relatively plausible, I am not convinced that a parallel three-fold account of adequacy is, as he claims, "necessary to make Spinoza's philosophy consistent" (Kisner 2011: 43). One could certainly argue, against Kisner, that when Spinoza claims that we have adequate ideas (Spinoza 1987: IIP38C, IIP47), he means adequate in the full sense of the term -- the only sense that Spinoza articulates. And, when we have adequate ideas, we are the adequate cause of certain effects

Kisner (2011) offers several reasons for doubting the possibility of human adequate ideas and adequate causation. But, as far as I can tell, all that this proposition establishes is that it is impossible for humans to be *exclusively* adequate causes. And this in no way precludes the possibility that humans could be adequate causes of some effects (when we have adequate ideas) and partial causes of others (when we have inadequate ideas). Nor do the other considerations that Kisner adduces provide sufficient warrant for his interpretation.

For instance, Kisner claims that "human ideas, since they must represent the finite modes of the body, cannot completely represent the causal antecedents of their object," and so cannot be fully adequate. Even if all human ideas have as their object [*objectum*] modes of the human body [Spinoza 1987: EIIP13], this does not mean that no part of the content, or *ideata*, of these ideas can be adequately represented. This is not to say that a univocal reading of adequate ideas and adequate causation is

entirely unproblematic. My point is just that the evidence that Kisner offers is not enough to persuade me that Spinoza did not believe in the possibility of *fully* adequate human ideas and, consequently, *fully* adequate human causation.

Here Kisner (2011) shows that Spinoza's account is not merely an *ad hoc* attempt to salvage freedom in an inhospitable metaphysics. Rather, it is, on his rendering, a *via media* between an untenable libertarian indeterminism and a crude, Hobbesian compatibilism. While the libertarian approach is incompatible with the principle of sufficient reason, Hobbesian compatibilism does not account for the full range of constraints on liberty, including “internal psychological forces” (Kisner 2011: 53). And, as Kisner (2011) effectively shows, Spinoza's account of autonomy -- which consists in forming adequate ideas, or being substantively rational -- avoids some of the pitfalls of connecting autonomy with merely procedural rationality (Kisner 2011: 60), without leading to a pernicious paternalism.

When we look at what Spinoza is talking about from the previous section, we can see that his idea of determinism runs into some serious problems. One of the far-reaching implications of Spinoza's theory is that of predeterminism. Predeterminism is “a strand of determinism which believes that all matters have been settled before their occurrences” (Cayne, 1992:298). What this means is that if Spinoza has his way, then we should not be punishing offenders because he has been determined to transgress the law. A culprit even when caught red-handed plus all the available evidence pointing to his guilt, could still be exonerated on the grounds that he could not have acted otherwise. This is the implication of a hard deterministic thesis in Spinoza which extends to fatalism as well.

Secondly, Spinoza's argument against freewill is full of problems. This needs to be examined due to the fact that he employed several arguments to show why freewill is not possible before vying for a deterministic conclusion. There is a huge problem with Spinoza's viewpoint on free will. If there is no freedom of choice then there would be no meaning in our lives. We would be mechanical machines enslaved under the dictates of external and internal factors.

Self-Assessment Exercise

1. _____ is “a strand of determinism which believes that all matters have been settled before their occurrences”
2. _____ which holds that psychological factors such as motives and instincts determine human actions and so the human person cannot be said to be free if these factors are solely responsible in causing humans to act.

2.4 Summary

In this study unit, we have examined determinism which means that human actions are determined. In other words, it is the theory that suggests that there is a cause for everything and these causes determine human actions. Two broad versions of deterministic thinking viz: soft and hard versions were identified and described. While the former allows and makes room for holding humans morally accountable for their actions, the latter leaves no room for moral responsibility at all. We also went further to examine the various types of these broad versions of determinism to include; physical, theological, historical, psychological determinism and the problems associated with each and outlined their various proponents. We have looked at what is determinism in the foregoing study unit. We identified various versions of determinism and the specific types of determinisms there are and their defenders in the history of philosophy. We concluded the study unit by taking our cue from Kant who argued that it is the moral experiences of the human person that gives us insights and clues into thinking seriously that the human person indeed is free. For if the human person is not free, then there is hardly any basis for the human feeling of remorse, regret, blameworthiness and praise worthiness as well as the meaningfulness and reasonability of the various codes whether criminal or social that guide society. In this unit, we have considered the metaphysics of Spinoza. We have also been able to look at some of the problems that can be found in his determinism. We have shown that his determinism is a form of predeterminism and this has some moral implications.

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2.6 Possible Answers to SAE

1. Predeterminism; 2. Psychological determinism

UNIT 3 DETERMINISM IN AFRICAN METAPHYSICS

Unit structure

- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Intended Learning Outcomes
- 3.3 Determinism in African Thought System
- 3.4 Summary
- 3.5 References/Further Reading/Web Resources
- 3.6 Possible Answers to SAE

3.1 Introduction

In this unit, we are going to consider the ways through which Africans conceive determinism. The idea of destiny among Africans as a version of determinism will be used as a discussion.

3.2 Intended Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit, learners ought to be able to:

- Understand how Africans conceive determinism;
- Understand how African metaphysics inform the idea of moral agency; and
- Understand the African idea of predestination.

3.3 Determinism in African Thought System

African metaphysics may be said to mean the thoughts and ideas about Africans on the subject matter of reality (Balogun, 1997). In this section, we shall be exposing the deterministic tendency that is present in African world-view, as we use the Yoruba thought system as a basis. We shall be relying on the thoughts of Oladele Balogun (2007) as we expose the place of determinism in African metaphysical world-view.

Balogun begins by an analysis of some terms in his words: “Before delving into a critical exposition of the metaphysical nature of the Yoruba concepts of *ori* and human destiny, there is need to make explicit, such metaphysical concepts that will subsequently enhance our understanding on the theme. Hence the clarifications of concepts like *ori* human destiny, fatalism and determinism (or predestination)” (Balogun, 2007:118). A person in Yoruba thought is according to Hallen and Sodipo (1986: 105) made up of three important elements: *ara* (body), *emi* (life giving element) and *ori* (Spiritual head, which is thought to be responsible for human

destiny). In the Yoruba concept of person, *ara* (body) refers to all the tangible elements that make a person both externally and internally such as the brain, kindly, intestine, heart etc. and not just the body frame which houses other constituents of a person (Balogun 1997: 333). *Emi* (the life giving entity), the Yoruba believe, is an immaterial element that provides the ‘animating force’ or energy without which a person cannot be said to be living at all, talk less of being conscious (Oladipo 1992: 19).

It is according to Bolaji Idowu (1962: 169), “closely associated with the breath and the whole mechanism of breathing which is its most expressive manifestation”. In other words, *emi* (the life giving entity) is regarded by the Yoruba as the life-force of a person; its presence or absence in a person makes the difference between life and death². The third element, *Ori* which is of immediate concern to us in this unit, represents the individuality element in a person. *Ori* is the element responsible for a person’s personality and represents human destiny. *Ori*, an immaterial entity, otherwise called ‘inner-head’ is intractably connected with human destiny. It is responsible for the actuality and worth of man in the material world. For the Yoruba, *ori* is believed to be not only the bearer of destiny but also to be the essence of human personality which rules, control and guides the life and activities of the person (Idowu 1962: 170).

Hence, *ori* is the element which symbolizes human destiny and the whole of a person’s personality. Kola Abimbola (2006: 80) seems to go beyond the views of Hallen and Sodipo, S. Oladipo and Bolaji Idowu in his account of the nature of a person in Yoruba thought, when he added a fourth element, *ese*. Literally translated, *ese* means ‘leg’, but within the content of human personality, it means “strife”, “hard work” or “struggle”. According to Abimbola (2006), *ese* introduces the principle of individual effort, strife or struggle before the potentialities encapsulated in one’s *ori* can be actualized. As a symbol of power, mobility and activity, *ese* is a vital part of human personality both in the physical and spiritual senses.

Human destiny is the mysterious power believed to control human events. Destiny or predestination is the believe that whatever happens or that will happen in the future has been preordained and happened according to an earlier master plan. It is the belief that every person has his biography written before coming to the world which consequently implies that anything one does is not something done out of free will but something done in fulfillment of preordained history (Oladipo, 1992: 36). Such a belief as this is usually accredited to a divine mind or Supreme Being, who is said to have pre-existentially fixed all the events that, could possibly and would take place in a man’s earthly existence.

A proper understanding of the determinism in the Yorubas thought would be more understood with the notion of *Ori*. There are various myths on

the methods of acquisition of *ori* in Yoruba thought. While it will not be exhaustive embarking on an explicit examination of those myths in a unit of this nature, the central salient points shall be outlined. According to the Yoruba, it is believed that before coming into the world, everybody was obliged to go and choose an *ori* from among a large number of *oris* stored in *Ajala's* warehouse. *Ajala*, (a potter) has the duty of molding human heads. The process of human creation is not complete without him. While *Orisanla* (arch-divinity) is understood by the Yoruba to be the maker of *ara* (body), who later passes the lifeless figure to *Olodumare* (Supreme Deity) to put *emi* (life giving entity), *Ajala* is responsible for the creation of *ori*. *Ajala* is a skilled potter, a drunkard, a debtor and an irresponsible and careless creature (Morakinyo 1983: 78). In any case, *Ajala* through his utter carelessness is responsible for molding heads of different shapes and qualities (some are good and many are bad). In the house of *Ajala*, every man makes a choice of his own *ori*, after which every man coming into the world passes through the water of forgetfulness-*Omi igbagbe*, which is the boundary between heaven and earth. In another myth as accounted by Bolaji Idowu (1962: 173–174) and Morakinyo (1983: 72), the acquisition of one's *ori* is done by kneeling before the high authority *Olodumare* (Supreme Deity), who confers one's portion, that is, what a person would live up to on earth. This type of acquiring 'ori' is referred to as *Ayanmo* (that which is affixed to someone). In all these myths, *orunmila* (arch-divinity), the founder of *ifa* (oracle) system of divination, is noted to be a witness of man's choice of destiny. Little wonder he is referred to as *Eleri-Ipin* (the witness of destiny) and the only one competent to reveal the type and content of 'ori' chosen by each person.

For a better understanding on the acquisition of *ori*, Bolaji Idowu (1962: 173) gives a trimorphous conception of the Yoruba belief in destiny. According to him, the choice of one's destiny could be one of these three ways:

A person may kneel down and choose his destiny, this is called *A kun le yan* (that which is received kneeling). He may kneel down and receive his destiny – that is called *A kun le gba* (that which is received kneeling). Or he may have his destiny affixed on him – for this, Yoruba give the name *Ayanmo* (that which if affixed to one).

Understandably from the above, the Yoruba believe that destiny once chosen by one or conferred is unalterable. In other words, it becomes doubly sealed up such that the earthly existence of the person is an aftermath of the type of *ori* one chose or conferred on one. This is the main place where determinism is presented to the African metaphysical world-view.

On the notion of African Metaphysics, S. Ade Ali (1995: 104), in consonance with this Balogun (2007) soft-deterministic interpretation of the concepts of *ori* and human destiny argues that the Yoruba conception of destiny is repugnant of harsh words of hard determinism, repudiating fatality and necessity. The temptation to consider the metaphysical nature of the Yoruba belief in *ori* and human destiny in the light of fatalism or hard determinism (as Bolaji Idowu (1962), Richard Taylor (1982), Ebun Oduwole (1996), etc have done) is natural; however, incorrect. It is only inexplicable traits of a person either towards evil or good that the Yoruba explain through appeal to destiny. Destiny in this sense signifies an unfreedom act which only implies a transcendental relation that explains the unusual, baffling and untoward complexities of life which must come to pass no matter what. Only destiny understood in this sense is analogous to fatalism. Outside this sense, and as it is often the case, the belief in ‘ori’ and human destiny in Yoruba coheres with the notion of *afowofa* (self-causation), where one is held responsible for actions deliberately performed by oneself, while attributing to his *ori* those whose causes transcend him. It is when the effort to rectify a bad destiny or to maintain a good destiny come to a naught that the Yoruba recourse to fate (fatalism).

There is no doubt that with the way that we have been able to use the Yoruba framework, it is still a matter that is imbued with some of the deterministic tendencies present in Spinoza’s determinism. Due to the inability of coming up with a good solution to the agency of human action, perhaps a soft-deterministic approach would be helpful.

Self-Assessment Exercise

1. _____ is understood by the Yoruba to be the maker of *ara* (body)
2. _____ may be said to mean the thoughts and ideas about Africans on the subject matter of reality

3.4 Summary

From the discussion undertaken thus far, we can see that the role of African metaphysics is central to how the idea of determinism is understood. From the traditional Yoruba view of destiny, we can see that determinism is central.

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3.6 Possible Answers to SAE

1. *Orisanla*; 2. African Metaphysics

End of Module Questions

1. For _____ form of determinism God has the foreknowledge of all actions and so it is very problematic to reconcile the fact of freedom of the human person and the knowledge of such action known by God prior to the action ever taking place.
2. _____ form of determinism denies any extra-physical dimension of the human person given the mechanistic orientation at the foundation of materialism generally.
3. _____ which simply holds that history and the events in history are determined
4. _____ is the belief that whatever happens or that will happen in the future has been preordained and happened according to an earlier master plan.

MODULE 5 FURTHER REFLECTIONS ON SOME OTHER PROBLEMS OF METAPHYSICS

The various units that will be encountered in this module are going to disclose the ways that some metaphysical problems have rendered philosophers at logger heads. These kinds of problems with never-ending questions and unsatisfactory answers are usually called perennial problems of philosophy. We shall begin this module by considering the idea of participation in the next unit.

UNIT 1 PARTICIPATION

Unit structure

- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Intended Learning Outcomes
- 1.3 Participation as a Metaphysical Problem
- 1.4 Summary
- 1.5 References/Further Reading/Web Resources
- 1.6 Possible Answers to SAE

1.1 Introduction

In ordinary usage, participation means to be involved in an activity or to take part in or be part of something, event. In philosophical parlance however the term evokes much more than that because of some questions that such a notion connotes. Thus, this study unit will briefly explore the philosophical import of the notion of participation with a view to outlining some of the problems the philosophical usage of the terms implicates. Given that material objects exist, do such things as properties exist? If yes, how and in what sense do they exist, apart from the material objects that instantiate them? Do the material objects in which these properties inhere exhaust the possibility of their existence such that when the material object goes out of existence for example, what becomes of the properties that once inhere in the material objects? What is the nature of the relationship between the existing material objects and the properties that inhere in these material objects? What is the notion of participation all about in philosophy? How do you define and understand the term participation are questions this study unit seeks to examine in this brief study unit.

1.2 Intended Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- discuss what the term connotes/means
- discuss the idea of participation in philosophy
- state the philosophical problems the characterization provokes.

1.3 Participation as a Metaphysical Problem

Participation is generally the concept Plato uses to explain the relationship between two worlds; the world of the senses/world of appearances characterized by fleeting and passing or transiting features and the world of ideas/forms which consists of the necessary, permanent and enduring essences which alone possesses real existence, its reality is true to the extent that it participates, shares in or imitates the fully real of the ideal world. Thus, what we have in the transient world are mere copies, imitation, or participation of essences of these realities in the most real and model world of the ideal.

Two worlds are distinguished in Plato's idealism; this forms the overarching character of his metaphysics and contained in his theory of the world of forms or the ideal world. The two worlds are – world of existence or reality generally and the world of the senses. In the latter, that is the present world or world of the senses; things are rather transient and passing while in the former is transcendent world wherein inheres permanent things, universals, essences of things. Things exist in their originality and completeness in this realm according to Plato. In fact the ideas and knowledge of universals such as wisdom, goodness, beauty, justice and other universals are as a result of the pre-existence experience of the soul in that realm that we are able to recall only when the soul remembers or recollects them. The vagueness with which we are able to recall this stuff was caused by the pains associated with birth.

Plato's philosophy is called idealism not because he regards ideas as reality or reality as ideas but because he transfers the essence of things into the ideal world in his philosophy. In that ideal world alone is objective reality discoverable. Thus, what constitutes being, the essence of being can be found in that world of ideas/forms. It is in the relationship of the two worlds that the idea of participation finds its meaning. For example, when one is said to be growing in wisdom, beauty or improving in the sense of justice, this means that there is an objective wisdom, beauty, and justice in which one participatorily increases. This ideal being or virtue is in the ideal world. It alone gives satisfactory explanation of the progression of knowledge and particularly of the being we experience, participatorily here and now. A flower can

be beautiful only in so far as it partakes of absolute beauty (Iroegbu 1995: 138).

There is however some problems that arise in the sense that a substance cannot exist apart from that of which it is a substance, how do they relate if they exist apart? In response, Plato says it is only through participation. This creates an obvious ontological dualism. For the metaphor of participation, imitation and reminiscence for soul-body relationship, then there is an essential ontological gap that needs filling. If there is only participation between things; that is, between particular objects along with their properties in relation to their perfect others in the world of ideas, there is no substantial causality and the problem of origin is left unresolved.

As against the transcendent place of existence of universals in the world of forms seen in Plato, Aristotle defends the position that universals exists, not outside of the real world but in the world of our experience. This understanding is the basis of science and of all authentic and balanced philosophy.

The concept was also prevalent in the thoughts of some medieval philosophers such as St. Thomas Aquinas in their understanding of the attributes of God and how the human person shares in the attributes though in an imperfect and limited form. According to Omoregbe (1996: 157), for although creatures are beings, in actual fact God is being itself; he is not simply a being but Being itself. He does not simply have life, but he is life itself; he is not simply just (as we say of human beings), but he is justice itself; he is not simply good, but he is Goodness itself, Beauty itself, etc. he is the infinite Source of all these attributes; he does not simply have them, rather they are identical with his being as the Source from which human beings share or participates in.

Self-Assessment Exercise

1. _____ is generally the concept Plato uses to explain the relationship between two worlds
2. _____ defends the position that universals exists, not outside of the real world but in the world of our experience.

1.4 Summary

This study has examined the concept of participation. It looked at the meaning of the concept and how it is central to understanding the nature of relationship between universals and the particulars. The meaning and definition of participation was examined. The problem of understanding

the relationship between particulars and universals is central in our understanding of the concept of participation. The contributions of Plato and of course Aristotle during the Classical era were significant in the building blocks that formed the philosophical works of medieval scholars to the concept of participation is not only significant but huge in many ways. According to the analysis the particulars are identifiable and calibrated based on the extent to which they inhere in them, the universals. Whereas the universals exist in perfection in the world of forms the particulars in their imperfection only participate or imitate the universals.

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1.7 Possible Answers to SAE

1. Participation; 2. Aristotle

UNIT 2 ESSENCE AND EXISTENCE

- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Intended Learning Outcomes
- 2.3 What is Essence?
 - 2.3.1 What is Existence?
- 2.4 Summary
- 2.5 References/Further Reading/Web Resources
- 2.6 Possible Answers to SAE

2.1 Introduction

The concept of essence and existence are a pair of metaphysical trope (recurrent and persistent theme) through which we can further understand and characterise the nature of reality. Various philosophers have different views on what constitute the essence of reality and what the very nature of existence is all about to which this present module shall focus attention. For this study unit, the focus will be the examination of what is essence and existence and how both terms have been used in the metaphysical parlance through the years. In doing this, the study unit will attempt a clarification or definition of what each term means and how the various philosophers have understood them during the major epochs of philosophy. For this study unit, the overall interest is to attempt the examination of these two concepts or principles that are often used in the attempt to describe and capture reality. What and how do we best define these terms in ways that address the main currents of what each mean? What are the historical discourses associated with these two important tropes in the description of reality. It is important to note upfront that there is a contested position by existential ontologists or existential phenomenologists that essence is something added to existence or rather that existence takes on essence to be properly and uniquely characterized. In fact, they contend that only human beings exist, that other entities merely are; they are *seindes* not *dasein*. The term *dasein* characterizes human reality because of all entities; it is dynamically cast into the world. It is this inbuilt dynamism that accounts for human actions, creativity and innovations which other animals and non-sentient entities do not have. The point is that the term existence in ordinary usage is a corruption. It is a term that applies specifically to human being, considering its priority and capacities in the scheme of things, which other entities do not possess. That is why existence, for human reality, precedes essence.

2.2 Intended Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- explain what is essence
- explain what is existence
- discuss the historical contributions of various thinkers to these two terms and how relevant such efforts are today.

2.3 What is Essence?

Essence has been defined in quite a number of ways. One of the ways in which essence has been defined is as that by which a thing is what it is. It is that which a thing is before it took real or concrete actual existence. It is potency to being. When contrasted with existence, essence is that which takes on existence. Existence is the essence put into reality, the realization of the essential, real or concrete being.

Essence is seen as the definable nature of whatever exists. It is that which makes a being different from other beings in terms of its ability to define and show that a particular being is different from the another being. The essence of a particular being can then be conceived of without necessarily having to be the case that the being in question actually exists. Essence is therefore that which has existence but it is not existence. This idea is at the centre of the eidetic principle that the renowned phenomenologist, Edmund Husserl, talks about the being concerned only with essences and not existence per se or actual existence. The problem with this phenomenological view then becomes one of settling the question whether there can be essence without existence or existence without essence. Scholars are of the view that there cannot be a situation whereby essence can be conceived outside of existence or the consideration of existence outside of essence, for the two are complementary and are quite inseparable. This is the case as St. Thomas Aquinas argues that it is existence that gives meaning or makes essence real or part of reality as such. Hence, this Thomistic idea draws a line of distinction between essence and existence in the beings that are imperfect, for example, the human person or any other finite beings. For existence is not of the nature of finite beings as such.

2.3.1 What is Existence?

Existence means that which is a reality or which has true, actual being. It is that which we see, touch or know to be here or there or somewhere else. What makes this reality real is the act of existing, its perfection. It is what makes a thing be in reality, in itself, phenomenologically spread in existential universe. It is the passage from possibility to actuality,

from process to reality, from non-being to being, in other words, from nothing to something, (Iroegbu 1995: 48). It is important to quickly note that this feature of transition or change from being to non-being is only meaningful when finite beings are in question and not Necessary Being who has as parts of its very nature, existence as well as essence together.

It is important to note upfront that there is a contested position by existential ontologists or existential phenomenologists that essence is something added to existence or rather that existence takes on essence to be properly and uniquely characterized. In fact, they contend that only human beings exist, that other entities merely are; they are *seindes* not *dasein*. The term *dasein* characterizes human reality because of all entities; it is dynamically cast into the world. It is this inbuilt dynamism that accounts for human actions, creativity and innovations which other animals and non-sentient entities do not have.

The point is that the term existence in ordinary usage is a corruption. It is a term that applies specifically to human being, considering its priority and capacities in the scheme of things, which other entities do not possess. That is why existence, for human reality, precedes essence.

We have tried in the foregoing to define and delineate what essence and existence mean separately. In this section we will now examine the two since they both always go together as complementary as well as inseparable themes in metaphysics. In fact, to understand how the two are so related it is important to distinguish between the idea of contingent beings and necessary being. As the term contingency implies any being that exists contingently and so does not have to exist and it is imperfect in many respects. Such beings do not have as part of their nature both essence and existence. For a being to be categorized as necessary being it follows that the being cannot but exist because it has as part of its very nature both essence and existence. Thus, in the necessary being, essence and existence are identical. According to the scholastics, particularly, Thomas Aquinas defended this view to the extent that contingent beings depend and rely on Necessary Being (God) for its existence. In the modern period, Kant argued that the attempt to separate existence from a being, contingent being in this case was flawed. This is the case because to think or imagine a being is to take for granted its existence since existence is in fact not an attribute or a predicate of the being.

In the contemporary times, the characterization we draw upon from the medieval era that consider existence to limit the essence of a contingent being is at a crossroad given the radical shifts in the understanding of the human person. The work is in progress within the technological and

scientific world for the trans-human project. There are promises regarding possible fundamental changes to how we think and consider some of these features with which we try to understand the being of the human person and other emerging developments - ambitious projects and programmes in the field of artificial intelligence and robotics science.

Self-Assessment Exercise

1. The term _____ characterizes human reality because of all entities; it is dynamically cast into the world
2. One of the following is not a contingent being (a) Man (b) God (c) Elephants (c) Ants

2.4 Summary

The brief study unit discusses essence and existence against the backdrop of our understanding of being divided into necessary being and contingent beings. Whereas necessary being had as parts of its very nature both essence and existence as well as other attributes that are part of it necessarily but that is not the case for contingent beings whereby we can in fact draw a line between its essence and its existence. That we can draw a line of distinction between existence and essence does not mean that we can have essence without existence or existence without essence since the two are complementary and inseparable. In fact, it is existence that gives meaningfulness to essence and it also limits it as well. It defines what essence is and what existence is. Whereas existence means that which is a reality or which has true, actual being; essence is that by which a thing is what it is. These views on the features of existence and essence are at a threshold at a time there is increasing desire and effort through science and technology to attempt a radical shift in the understanding of the human person through transhumanism and other related projects. The study unit attempted to define and characterize essence and existence as one of the interesting metaphysical principles to explain reality or the beingness of reality. This has attended the interest of philosophers through the history of metaphysics. Essence simply means the 'what' of a thing or being while existence is the act of being exercised by beings. At the centre of this discourse is the fundamental attempt to understand the nature of being; necessary being or contingent beings. While necessary being exists necessarily contingent beings exist contingently; that is, their own existence is not necessary and they do not have as part of their nature both existence and essence. It adds to the contemporary challenge that such characterization is due to face increasing and growing advancement in science and technology aimed at transforming the human being in very radical and

fundamental ways; that is, the project of trans-humanism for instance is a case in point.

2.5 References/Further Reading/Web Resources

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2.6 Possible Answers to SAE

1. Dasein; 2. (b)

UNIT 3 CHANCE/INDETERMINISM AND CAUSALITY

- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Intended Learning Outcomes
- 3.3 Chance and Indeterminacy
 - 3.3.1 What is Causality?
 - 3.3.2 David Hume on Causality and Chance
- 3.4 Summary
- 3.5 References/Further Reading/Web Resources
- 3.6 Possible Answers to SAE

3.1 Introduction

Chance is often contrasted with necessity in which case the explication of these terms will shed some light on other important and related terms very often used in relation to these terms. This study unit undertakes a discursive expose on the terms chance/indeterminism and causality with a view to understanding how the terms are related and interrelated with one another and their implications for our understanding on the operations and workings of the universe and our place within it as such. How does the universe and what is contained there operate? Is or are there laws that are foundational to events and occurrences that occur in the universe? Is there a place for chance and its logic in the affairs and operations in the universe? What are the implications for adopting a view predicated on the logic of luck? Does it sit well or contradict those who believe or hold the view that the created order of the universe operates based on inexorable laws put in place by the creative power? If there are these laws, can we know them? Do we even need to invoke a creative power in order to have an understanding of the operations of the universe? What is the limit of these laws? Where does chance come in? Are things or events indeterminate? If they are determinate, what are these causes? What are the implications of these understanding for problems of freedom and determinism we have examined in one of the previous modules in this same course guide? These are some of the few questions that will inform and guide the following reflection undertaken in this study unit.

3.2 Intended Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- state what chance/indeterminate means
- explain what causality means
- assist students appreciate our place within the larger universe.

3.3 Chance and Indeterminacy

These terms are closely associated with the notion of causality especially when contrasted such that to really understand them would mean an explication of the easier term – causality. Hence, indeterminism technically as applied in philosophy means an event that has no cause. When there is not a cause for an event then chance becomes the only operational trope by which that makes sense or any meaning. The implication of this line of thinking therefore is that chance becomes the principle in place when there is absence of a cause. For example, the popular sports betting that is increasingly becoming both interesting as well as a troubling culture among young people across Nigeria today.

Suppose someone purchased a bet ticket and bets for a Manchester City win just before the start of the final match that held during 2021 Champions League Cup Final Match between Chelsea and Manchester City. The game ended in favour of Chelsea to the shocking experience of loss of the fellow who purchased the ticket for a Manchester City win. Analyzing this scenario of the result and the subsequent loss of the ticket purchased largely underscore this understanding of chance and indeterminacy in relation to the absence of a cause/uncaused cause. In other words, when one ticket is bought for a game of finals and just a team is expected to win, one who gambles at the beginning of the game may have relied on the principle of chance to bet for a win for a club that eventually lost in the final match. This is the case because the game could have gone either way as the possible result was undetermined.

Without going into the details of the argument for and against chance or indeterminacy as it is also of specific interest to physicists, mathematicians and scholars on probability theories, suffice it to note that the idea of chance or indeterminacy is not only problematic but quite inconsistent with developments and advancements taking place and happening in modern science. Einstein's remark that God does not play dice is a pointer to the robust understanding of the workings of nature - Newtonian laws for example which provided a deterministic account of the laws that govern motion in the universe and the obvious successes this have had for the space science and exploration, amongst others.

3.3.1 What is Causality?

How can we Describe Causality? If we take for granted that the world in which we live; that is, the universe is deterministic to some extent then it is very sensible to take for granted the relations between cause and effect to explain the causal relations that underpin the notion of causality. While a cause generally taken to precede the effects in the temporal context, there are, however, some cases wherein the two; that is, cause

and effect can be contemporaneous. An example of this is the movement of the towing vehicle causing the towed vehicle to move, (Omoregbe 1996: 25).

According to Omoregbe (1996: 25), a cause is that which brings about a certain effect. In other words, a cause is that by which something (an effect) is produced. While attempting to provide an account for the possibility of change, Aristotle enumerates four causes. They are; the formal cause – determines what a thing is; the material cause – that out of which a thing is made; the efficient cause – by what a thing is brought about; and the final cause – the end or purpose for which it is brought about.

In contemporary usage however, the term “cause” seems to be used more often for one type of the causes, namely, the efficient cause – by what a thing is brought about or into existence. This has become an important part of the scientific enterprise based on the two fundamental assumptions upon which the notion of cause as responsible for effect does make any sense. Two of those assumptions take granted the fact that the world is an orderly one; governed by laws. The thinking is that the universe is not just a chaotic universe where anything can happen. These two basic assumptions presupposed in scientific reasoning include; the fact that nature is uniform and the fact of universality of causality – these two assumptions are at the centre of the inductive model of reasoning deployed in the sciences.

Against the backdrop of the foregoing, there are other building blocks that rely on the presuppositions above to characterize our understanding of causality. The idea of necessary connection between cause and effect; whereby, whenever any effect is observed, there must be a cause closely related and responsible for the effect we notice or observe. Thus, there cannot be any event or effect without a cause since they are necessarily connected or related. David Hume was the first modern philosopher to raise objections to this assumption and characterization of the necessary relation held or believed to be between a cause and an effect or event. This has become the classic Hume’s problem or the problem of induction generally – a theme that students would expectedly have the opportunity for more detailed assessment in another course – Philosophy of Science.

3.3.2 Hume on Causality and Chance

For David Hume, we do not have any experience of the assumed necessary connection between a cause and effect rather what we have that has become a part of thinking and talking of the relationship are merely as a result of habitual disposition of the mind to constantly

associate the relation just because these stuffs occur contiguously; that is, we usually observe that they happen very often in sequence. Hume also undermined the presupposition we hold about the fact of the uniformity of nature because according to him, there is no way to prove the fact of the uniformity of nature. For example, there is no guarantee that the future will follow the order of the past or resemble the past in perfect manner. Having undermined the two assumptions at the heart of the principle of causality and therefore the operations of the laws of nature, many philosophers thus prefer to adopt a more appealing term that leaves out the idea of intrinsic or necessary connection between cause and effect. How does Hume discuss chance and causality? Let us look at his ideas closely.

Hume had been influenced by the empiricism of Thomas Hobbes and John Locke before him (Hospers, 1999). Hume was however, displeased with the notion of causation and how humans are quick too often to infer that every event must have a cause. This is exactly the point that Hume's skeptical conclusion is always directed at. It must be stated from the onset that David Hume was a thorough going empiricist who ended up with skepticism (Stumpf;1979). In this expository essay, we shall be concerned with his idea of causality or induction, evincing how he arrived at such skeptical conclusions. Hume's problem with the idea that every event must have a cause may be summed as follows:

If we look for the origin of the idea of causation, Hume says, we find that it cannot be any particular inherent quality of objects; for objects of the most different kinds can be causes and effects. We must look instead for relationships between objects. We find, indeed, that causes and effects must be contiguous to each other, and that causes must be prior to their effects. But this is not enough: we feel that there must be a necessary connection between cause and effect, though the nature of this connection is difficult to establish (Anthony, 2006: 260).

David Hume was primarily against the idea that things that happen must have a cause, and if this is the case an effect usually follows the cause. As shown in the above, David Hume concludes skeptically if we can ever really know that a particular event is traceable to a particular cause. In other words, we cannot induct that a particular event has a sole cause. This has been termed the problem of induction. In the words of Helen Beebe (2011:731): "the problem of induction is the problem of justifying the belief that the unobserved resembles the observed." How did he arrive at this skeptical conclusion? This question shall occupy the attention of this essay shortly.

David Hume made use of many examples but the most famous, which this essay shall employ is the billiard ball instance. Suppose that we have

one billiard ball lying at rest on the table, and another moving rapidly towards it. They collide. It's logical, isn't it, for the one at rest to start moving as a result of the collision? Well, no, he says, it's easy to imagine that the one at rest remains in that state, while the other ball returns in the direction from which it came (Salmon;2002:20).

In this example, Hume invites his readers to imagine a case of one ball at rest and another that is in motion which collides with the former. We have by experience been led to think that as a result of the collision the former ball should start moving. Why do we believe that one ball is the cause of another's motion? Hume answers that it is habit and doubt if we can ever locate the cause. Hume, in section VII titled 'Of the Idea of Necessary Connexion' in *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, avers:

When we look about us towards external objects, and consider the operation of causes, we are never able, in a single instance, to discover any power or necessary connexion; any quality, which binds the effect to the cause, and renders the one an infallible consequence of the other. We only find, that the one does actually, in fact, follow the other. The impulse of one billiard-ball is attended with motion in the second. This is the whole that appears to the outward senses. The mind feels no sentiment or inward impression* from this succession of objects: Consequently, there is not, in any single, particular instance of cause and effect, anything which can suggest the idea of power or necessary connexion (Hume, 2007: 46).

Hume examines two arguments to evince his position. First, he searched for logical relations between cause and effect. He concluded that it would be impossible to construe an effect logically from a cause since other possible causes are conceivable without contradiction. For instance, let us assume that a sleeper sets an alarm for 4 P.M. and exactly this period a large thunder clap sounded, bringing the sleeper to life. Hume invites us to ask which is actually the cause (alarm or thunder clap) of the effect (waking state of sleeper). Hume with this logic claims that we cannot ascertain which the real cause is as one cannot be ruled out by another. This implies that "cause and effect are not logical relations" (Salmon; 2002:20). But is there physical relations? We examine this alternative shortly.

The second possibility that Hume explores is a physical relation. He believes that when a cause and effect happens, there are three physical or factual relations that are observable:

- Cause appears before effect;
- Contiguity or close proximity in space and time; and

- Constant Conjunction producing similar results in other similar cases.

Hume thereby concludes that beyond these three, he cannot observe what actually caused an activity. In his own words, Hume testifies: “Beyond these three circumstances of contiguity, priority and constant conjunction, I can discover nothing in this cause” (Hume, 2007).

Hume, therefore attained skeptical conclusion regarding the real connection between the cause and the effect. Hume concludes that the constant conjunction, which reveals nothing about the causal relations in the physical situation, has an influence on our minds. If we observe the same pattern of billiard-ball collisions several times, we come to expect the pattern to be repeated. When we see the collision, “habit” – Hume’s term – leads us to expect motion to occur in the ball initially at rest. Notice, however, that this conclusion puts the connection between cause and effect in the human mind, not in the physical world (Salmon, 2002: 21).

Thus, the term sufficient reason or sufficient condition now is adopted to foreground an effect to take place or to be produced. Cause is no longer seen in terms of intrinsic or necessary connection between cause and effect but when there is a sufficient condition present, an effect can be observed though not necessarily.

It is important to state that this idea of causality is largely material and physical within the western thought system that may not necessarily be an exhaustive characterization of it in other cosmologies. For example, in African cosmology, the notion of causality is not necessarily material or physical as within some worldviews where there can be extra-physical modes of causes for certain effects however controversial.

Self-Assessment Exercise

1. Hume examines _____ arguments to evince his position (a) Three (b) Two (c) Five (d) Four
2. When tossing a coin, the chances of getting a head over a tail can be seen an instance of _____ (a) Chance (b) Cause (c) Predeterminism (d) None of these

3.4 Summary

The study unit examined the meaning of chance/indeterminacy and causality. It notes that chance or indeterminacy is the absence of cause or uncaused cause for an event or effect. The notion is however very

problematic as it is complex and of interest to experts in sciences such as physics, mathematics and probability sciences. A universe characterized as orderly and somewhat deterministic does not seem to align with the assumptions of chance or indeterminacy to operate because there are laws of nature that guide the operations and events in nature. The notion of causes developed and enumerated by Aristotle were highlighted and how only one form of it; that is, the efficient cause is now associated with causality in modern thinking/science. The notion of causality was defined as the causal relations between cause and effect; sometimes a cause preceded an effect, and some other times they happen at the same time. The presuppositions that are assumed for this to be the case especially in providing an account of how the universe operates were identified to include the universality of causality and the fact of the uniformity of nature. Some other terms associated with causality such as constant necessary connection between causes and effects were identified. These assumptions and terms were criticized by the classic intervention of David Hume that undermined the plausibility of the logic of inductive reasoning at the heart of modern science and our common sense thinking and way of talking about the world/universe popularly regarded as Hume's problem in philosophy. In place of the problematic nature of the use of necessary connection, philosophers and scientists now adopt a less problematic phrase – sufficient reason or sufficient condition to be satisfied before an event is produced or can be observed. It again noted that the notion of physical causality may not be a universal feature for all as in some other cosmologies such as the African thought, there can be extra-physical causal claims to certain operations or events or effects however controversial – paranormal operations for example. The study unit examined the notion of chance/indeterminacy and causality. It identified the four causes outlined by Aristotle, and the now adopted version of cause in modern science – the efficient cause. It also outlined the basic characterization of causality and related terms while noting the assumptions upon which there are causal relations between cause and effect. It touched on the problem associated with the idea of necessary connection and how humans came about the formulation. In place of the problematic nature of the idea of necessary connection, sufficient condition or sufficient reason has been adopted as a less problematic phrase to capture what the conditions that are to be met before we observe an effect or expect certain events to take place.

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3.6 Possible Answers to SAE

1. (b); 1. (a)

UNIT 4 THEORIES OF TIME AND SPACE

- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 Intended Learning Outcomes
- 4.3 Time and Space as a Metaphysical Problem
 - 4.3.1 Time, Space and Consciousness
 - 4.3.2 Time in African World-View
 - 4.3.3 Time in Easter Thought
 - 4.3.4 Temporality and Eternity
- 4.4 Summary
- 4.5 References/Further Reading/Web Resources
- 4.6 Possible Answers to SAE

4.1 Introduction

Topics central to this unit will include the following: Time and space, consciousness; Time in various cosmologies (African, Western and Eastern), Time, permanence and change; Temporality and Eternity. Thus, at the end of this module students will be well acquainted with the metaphysical discourses and debates around the theme of time and space. While this objective may be quite broad and ambitious, the immediate interest is to simply introduce the basics of the debate and expose the trajectories of how these themes are conceptualized in the various cosmologies without necessarily wading into so much details that is peculiarly and more appropriately within the scope of philosophy of science. How is time and space to be conceived and understood has remained very problematic in the history of (metaphysics) philosophy and other scientific disciplines. While the pair has continued to intrigue scholars, we continue to use these terms to capture our daily experiences of what happens in and around our world/universe and our place in such events. The terms space and time are not simple to define. It is also difficult to show what the real meanings of the terms. The focus here is however to provide the contributions of thinkers on what space and time in the context of metaphysics mean and outline some of the implications. Time or space in ordinary parlance is not so problematic. For example, when one is asked about what time of the day by tapping someone's wrist warrants the respondent simply checking his or her wristwatch to say what time it is. With regards to the notion of space in common parlance, imagine a scenario where one wants to board a vehicle from point A to point B. One flags down a taxi to ask if there is still some space left in the vehicle in order to join the vehicle. The driver responds by stating that the vehicle is filled up having on boarded the maximum number of passengers that the vehicle can contain. It implies there is not any more space left to contain the would-be traveler from point A to point B in the said vehicle and so will not be able to join the said vehicle. Another practical example is when one defines matter as

anything occupies space; say, a bag of rice weighing 25 kilos and the space it takes up in the entire storeroom. It implies other things can no longer be put into the said storeroom because of lack of space. In other words, the space has been taken up by the large 25kg bag of rice. These examples seem self-evident and axiomatic in terms of what time and space connote. However, when we enter into the realm of metaphysics, the philosophical and scientific nature of the problem then emerges for us. The study unit seeks to provide some basic characterization of the various efforts and attempts to capture what space and time mean in the history of metaphysics. It also examines some of the implications of the understanding of space and time for consciousness. In addition, the study unit will provide a brief survey of the various regional and contextual readings of time in Western, African and Eastern cosmologies. Finally, it will touch upon the notion of time, permanence and change as well as temporality and eternity.

4.2 Intended Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- explain the notion of space and time; to understand the nature of space and time;
- identify the basic characterization of time (and space) in various cosmologies; and
- underpin the import of the notion of time for concepts of change, permanence, temporality and eternity.

4.3 Time and Space as a problem in Metaphysics

Is it ever possible to imagine that there might have been a time before there were any events and that there may eventually be time after which there will be no events? Possibly yes, and if yes, then it is again possible to contemplate something about space in the sense that there might have been space with no objects – for time as well. These provocative remarks are crucial in helping us to think deeply about how fundamental these terms are for us. Can we fully ever fathom the whole gamut of the questions that such reflections implicate? I think not. For example, what sort of thing is space and what sort of thing is time? Do both terms mean the same thing or mean different things? And whether we can conceptualize the full import of one without the other is an example of such questions.

In some sense space and time have been conceptualized as comprising of continua; that is, consists of continuous manifolds, positions in which can be occupied by substances and events respectively, and which can have existence in their own rights. Such a naturalistic view point obviously creates some immediate problems associated with space and time in the

context of metaphysics. It is in virtue of the occupancy of such positions that events and processes are to be seen as taking place after each other and substances are to be seen in certain spatial relations.

In the classical era, the relational perspective dominated the understanding of space and time. In this perspective, the idea of void was used to capture the notion of space to describe intervals between bodies in which there are no bodies. These thinkers viewed the place of a thing in terms of the containing body of that thing, that is, in terms of the relation between the thing and whatever it is in. Accordingly, Aristotle uses place interchangeably for space as the limit of the first unmoving containing body. Thus, spatial and temporal intervals are potentially divisible infinitely but time intervals can also be potentially infinitely extendable; since time is the measure of motion in respect of before and after and there always has been and always will be motion or change. Since time is closely associated with motion or change means that there are at least event-less intervals between events.

This relational view did not end in the classical era as we see in Leibniz during the modern period who postulated that space is an order of coexistence as time is an order of successions. Space itself is an ideal thing so that space out of the world must be imaginary; similarly for time. Space is simply that which comprehends all places; it is that wherein the mind conceives the application of relations. Also in Locke, we see the same trend whereby, space and time are transformable from spatial and temporal relations having these properties, which we perceive as obtaining between things and events. In Newton, however, we find that both space and time are considered to have their own natures, without any dependence on anything else, and they constitute continua such that one part of either continuum is indistinguishable from another such part. Any differences that we take to exist are due to the things that occupy places and events that happen at moments; they are not due to space and time themselves. For, according to him, Absolute, true and mathematical time, of itself, and from its own nature flows equably without relation to anything external, and by another name is called duration. This is so because Absolute space, in its own nature, without relation to anything external remains always similar and immovable, (Hamlyn 127-129).

Time, permanence and change are part of the activities and features associated with the universe and all its constitutive elements including the human person. Whereas things happen and things or events occur that bring about the process of change some other aspects seem to remain in the state of permanence. The problem then becomes how one can account for both the fact of permanence as well as change at the same time in the universe.

What are the implications of the discussion of these themes so far? One major problem with space and time is whether space and time have properties of their own independent of the objects and events that they contain. More so, when space and time are conceived as merely relations, it does definitely lead to a problem about what it is that is thereby related? According to Hamlyn (131) any extended object is spatial, and its spatiality must on the relational view of space, consist in relations between elements. But if those elements are themselves spatial the same argument must apply to them; the only way to stop the regress that is generated by that is to suppose that the objects related by spatial relations are themselves non-spatial.

Kant rejects the relational view that underpinned the Newtonian and Leibnizian characterization of space and time. In its place therefore, he argued that the notion of forms of intuition is paramount in understanding what is space and time. Space and time make up forms having an intimate connection with perception and have no place outside that context. To speak of a form of intuition is to make reference to the form which perception or objects of perception must take. They are not merely intuitions as they themselves are a priori intuitions. To put the matter in another way, to think of space and time is not to think merely of ways of thinking about the world; it is to think of how the world actually is. Moreover, space and time are something actual, not merely possibilities, so that, whether or not they have physical properties in their right, they are themselves something in their own right. In that case, it is in virtue of space and time being what they are that things and events can stand in the kind of spatial and temporal relations that they do. Space and time do not consist of either actual or possible relations between things and events; they determine what relations of that kind are possible. Thus, conceived, it is logically possible that space and time should have existed without things and events to occupy them.

While we can quickly talk about the passage of time without something particularly similar or more appropriate to speak of space in the same manner; time also has one dimension while space is often characterized as three dimensional with physical events presupposing both space and time whereas mental events presuppose directly only time; the following propositions hold for both space and time; a). Space is not an empirical concept which has been derived from outer experiences b). Space is a necessary a priori representation which underlies all outer intuitions c). Space is not a discursive or general concept of relations of things in general d). Space is represented as an infinite manifold.

4.3.1 Time, Space and Consciousness

We think of ourselves and the role we play in the universe in manners that suggests that we think of ourselves or possibly events as moving from the past, through the present, into the future or of events as coming towards us from the future and receding behind us into the past. Another way of regarding the matter is to think of events as progressively coming into being, and this has become known as temporal becoming. There is however controversy whether it is objective or subjective.

What we have tried to capture above can of course be simply the mode and manner in which space and time is conceived within the Western philosophical tradition or cosmology to be somewhat linear consisting of the past, present and future and so would not need repeating here. Hence, the next two sections will highlight briefly the basic thinking of how time is understood in the African and Eastern cosmologies.

4.3.2 Time in African World-View

There has been quite a host of ways to describe and capture the notion of time in the African context which is of course problematic in many ways that space would not allow us to explore here. Suffice it to note that it is key to point out that there is the traditional African society and the contemporary African society; the former is peculiarly uninfluenced by western thinking and the latter with all the trappings of western influences. This notion of time in an African context is different from the notorious idea of “African time”. This notorious phrase has pejorative connotations by stating of the poor attitude and tardiness of Africans which generally is predicated by a relaxed attitude to time keeping. In this brief part of the section, the effort is not to debate the foregoing notorious phrase but to highlight what the metaphysical outlook to time is within the context of African thought/cosmology.

According to Mbiti, time in African traditional thought is generally two dimensional – having a long past very often associated with significant events and the idea of a present with the idea of the long future missing or absent given that time is composed of a series of events. This characterization was argued by Mbiti in his popular text, “African Religion and Philosophy”, where he examines the East African context and deploys the Swahili terms of *sasa* (now-existential period) and *zamani* (encompasses the past and the lived experiences of the present or about to happen experiences of the present). This view has severely been criticized by a host of scholars to the extent that to defend the Mbitian notion of time as representative of the notion of time in African thought would be a great disservice to African philosophy, a course students will encounter at some point in their programme for the award of Degree in

the discipline. It must be said, however, that one can safely state as Iroegbu (1995: 60) that Africans have a more relative, natural, humane and co-existential perception of time. They have close ties to the land as life-means and ancestral contact locus. One's past and one's future are existential, linked at times to the curious level of predestination and mediocrity. They are more tied to the rhythm of nature. Against this backdrop, the cyclical notion of time is not entirely absent in some African cosmologies. For example, the *abiku* phenomenon and the doctrine of reincarnation seem to suggest a cyclical notion of time, which seems not fully developed but through further research can be tasked to exhume via ethno-philosophical conversations. Students can be encouraged to share their various cultural worldviews of these themes as a way of also challenging students to begin to see around them possible areas where some of these deeply abstract reflections can be contextualized within their own cultural milieu. Again, there is also the phenomenological experience that seems to suggest one sees a cycle of repetition of similar or nearly closely related scenarios that flashes through one's virtual consciousness do seem to suggest a cyclical notion of time or events or circumstances happening around us and in the world.

4.3.3 Time in Eastern Thought/Cosmology

Against the backdrop of the universal experience of the reality of time, cultures and people of the East and South Asia to include; India, Japan, China, Korean and others have a well-developed and pervasive system of thought that not only addresses time and how time is understood in their cultures but also what the entire universe means to them and their attempt to produce a well-documented account of these events. Rather than the popular sense of linear notion of time in Western thought, the model of time popular in Eastern philosophy is fundamentally cyclical – the past is also the future, the future is also the past, the beginning also the end. The notion of the cycle of life – birth, death and rebirth or the cycle of seasons— are all part of the broader cycle of existence. Thus, within such a comprehensive system of thought, whereas space and time are rather abstract in the western thought, in the Eastern thought, they are quite concrete experiences and realities in human culture as everything is deeply related and connected with everything else in the entire universe.

4.3.4 Temporality and Eternity

The terms temporality and eternity are not easy terms to be given concise definitions that can convince many people given that the fundamental nature of the universe in respect of its origin and the explanatory account seem rather problematic and controversial. Thus,

the kind of meaning these terms evoke can only make sense when one settles the prior question of the proper account of the question of origin and nature of the universe in terms of whether the universe has a beginning and an end in view towards which the order of the universe is tended. For theistic metaphysicians who take for granted the created order; that is the universe to be created by God, these terms may not be as problematic as they would for those who do not share the same intellectual or religious orientation and convictions.

Iroegbu (1335: 112) writes that if spirituality places God outside space or place, Eternity places Him outside time. He is thus supra-temporal, existing in the everlasting now; that is, God's eternity as endless duration without change or end. It follows that the term eternity is in reference to time frame that refers to the idea that suggests without a beginning and an end unlike what is everlasting (that which may have a beginning but does not have an end). However, it is important to state briefly also that there are some materialist view of the world that sees everything especially the world as totally matter which can neither be created nor destroyed (the world is said to be eternal, as it has always been in existence and will continue to be) and so the eternal characterization can also be used to qualify such a view of the universe. Thus, the eternity of God flows directly from His essence as infinite. From the theological understanding of eternity as proposed above, the term temporality when contrasted with it can then be said to be what is time bound; in terms of it having a beginning and an end. In other words, something that is within time and measurable to the extent that its beginning and end point can be ascertained. For example, the being of the human person or other living things that come into material existence at some point and then dies at a time of its end.

Self-Assessment Exercise

1. This _____ view did not end in the classical era as we see in Leibniz during the modern period who postulated that space is an order of coexistence as time is an order of successions.
2. Pick the odd choice (a) Time (b) Change (c) Seasons (d) Primordality

4.4 Summary

This study unit has examined the notions of space and time. It began by presenting how less problematic these terms are in common parlance. The unit provided a historical account of the contributions of thinkers on the nature of space and time. It ran through the classical era to the modern era. In doing this, the relational perspective that perceives space

and time to be relationally meaningful which influenced the thoughts of some modern philosophers were highlighted. It also identified the Kantian view that considers space and time as forms of intuition. In fact, intuitively *a priori* as a much more comprehensive account than the relational model by highlighting the implications of what the Kantian notion achieves; specifically, by facilitating the possibility of thinking beyond and before space and time. In addition, the study unit also touched upon the various notions of time in various cosmologies; specifically, the Western, African and Eastern cosmologies. Some general characteristics of these cosmologies include: the linear notion very much present in the western cosmological thought. That is, Westerners seem to have a theoretical, mathematical, utilitarian concept and deployment of space and time. The cyclical character of time as replete in Eastern cosmology and slightly echoed in African cosmologies was described. In African cosmologies there seem to some attunement to nature and the events associated with the existential experiences of nature. Examples, of such can be seen in the kind of names given to people during wars, famine or reign of particular kings in various African societies. The study unit examined space and time as an intriguing problem in metaphysics that also is of interest to experts in the sciences as well. It deployed the exploratory and exhumation methods in providing an account of space and time in the history of philosophy. It began by looking at the relational notion of space and time and how this same way of understanding space and time was taken over in the modern period. It was Kant's intervention that considered space and time as radical forms of intuition that gave a reading of space and time in ways that both could exist without any form of temporal or spatial relations. It also examined the terms of eternity and temporality to mean outside of time and space yet exist of necessity (God) and the idea of contingency to give a sense of meaning to the temporality when used in reference to reality itself different from our way of characterizing reality.

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- The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (<http://Plato.Stanford.edu>) is an online resource of substantial entries that typically have helpful bibliographies. Entries undergo periodic revision and update.

4.6 Possible Answers to SAE

1. Relational; 2. (d)

UNIT 5 THE CONCEPT OF AUTHENTICITY

- 5.1 Introduction
- 5.2 Intended Learning Outcomes
- 5.3 Authentic/Inauthentic Living: Martin Heidegger in Focus
- 5.4 Summary
- 5.5 References/Further Reading/Web Resources
- 5.6 Possible Answers to SAE

5.1 Introduction

In this unit, we are going to round up the entire discourse of this course. We make do with the idea of authenticity as explained in the existential philosophy of Martin Heidegger. What is authenticity? How does it assist humans to reconsider themselves in a world that they find themselves? These are the core questions that we contend with.

5.2 Intended Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- discuss authentic living means
- idea of Martin Heidegger on authentic living
- explain what it means to live authentically from the perspective of Heidegger and existentialism.

5.3 Authentic/Inauthentic Living: Martin Heidegger in Focus

As a way of coming to terms with Heidegger's notion of authentic/inauthentic living, it is important to commence with the idea of existentialism. This will help us to understand the discourse of this unit. So, what then is existentialism?

Existentialism can be regarded as a trend or theme in philosophy rather than a particular dogma or system. After the sophists, its revival can be traced to the work of Kierkegaard at the beginning of the 19th century, but it was not until the 20th century that the philosophy became influential, largely as a result of the works of writers, such as Heidegger, Jaspers, Bubar, Camus and Sartre. Existentialism stands opposed to rationalist and empiricist doctrines that assume that the universe is a determined, ordered system intelligible to the reflective and contemplative observer. Instead, Existentialists endorse a more subjective vision of reality; primacy is accorded to the existence of the individual and his presence and participation in a constantly changing world (Sharma & Hyland, 1981: 64). Akinpelu (1981) describes Existentialism as a philosophy that is:

Concerned with the concrete experiences of the individual, with the quality of life that a man lives..., with a man trying to find his own place and meaning of his own life in his society, in the world and in the universe at large (Amaele, 2003: 99).

The existentialist is concerned with what man does now rather than what he will do or be in future or in the abstract. The existentialists are not interested in metaphysics or abstract ideas about man and his nature of the universe. They believe that it is useless and meaningless to speculate on the nature of man and the universe, leaving the concrete problems of the individual unsolved. They see man as a unique person that has unique problems that can only be handled individually and not collectively (Ibid). The Existentialists regard personal experiences as the most authentic knowledge of man can have, because it emanates directly from the individual who has it. It is undiluted and cannot be faked. For sentence, the man who suffered unemployment for five years after his university education has a direct experience of what unemployment or to write one's experience about it, but quite another to have it felt. This is the same way the Existentialists regard first-hand experience as the most important knowledge (Amaele, 2003:100).

Main Heidegger alongside Jean-Paul Sartre placed emphasis on the individuality of man. Heidegger created a sympathetic picture of man whom he said "comes into the world without his consent and without justification or reason for being" (Amaele, 2003: 101). Man, for Heidegger, like John Locke, was born empty but gradually creates himself from potentiality. In other words, the individual man is a creator of his destiny. We proceed to the Heideggerian idea of inauthenticity.

Martin Heidegger did not give a full account of what we could call a precise definition of what he means by Authenticity. However, he explained more on how to achieve it (Authenticity). He claims that the way to achieve authenticity "is to live a life in pursuit of possibility" and that we pursue this through resoluteness (Heidegger, 1962). Striking a balance between actuality and possibility for Heidegger, makes up an authentic life. the main interest of Martin Heidegger was to raise the issue of being which enables us in our capacity to make sense out of things. Heidegger's study was of a specific being known as the "human being" who he referred to as *Dasein*. "*Dasein*" itself literally means being there. By using the expression *Dasein*, Heidegger called attention to the fact that a human being cannot be taken into account except as being an in-existent in the middle of the world among other things (Warnock, 1970).

Heidegger believed and was concerned that philosophy should be able to

tell us the meaning of being. For him, the world is everything around us and are totally a part of it. Heidegger saw “Dasein” as an entity which in its being comports their understanding towards the being. Dasein may exist in either one of two modes (authenticity and in-authenticity) or it is modally unistinguishable but Dasein’s character needs to be understood a priori as being grounded in the state of being he called “being in the world” (Heidegger, 1962). To Heidegger, the expression “being-in-the-world” has several parts of its structure. It constitute of the duty to look into the ontological structure of the world define its “in the world ness” it also identifies the who that is within the mode of *Dasein*’s average needs to be sought out.

In *Being and Time*, Heidegger posits:

What is meant by “being-in”? Our proximal reaction is to round out this expression to “Being-in” in the world and we are inclined to understand the “Being-in” as being in something (Heidegger, 1962: 157).

Martin Heidegger was concerned about certain questions that deal with how human beings ought to live. These questions were centered on:

- i. What is the overall human situation in the world today especially in the social, political and economic order, which human beings have caused for themselves?
- ii. What hopes and inspirations must be put in place for the prosperity and survival of the human society?
- iii. What developmental path is the human being following and what opportunities do these promise the human society and its environment?

These are the questions that Heidegger saw as a major concern which he tried to provide answers to based on his doctrine of authenticity and in-authenticity.

In his “*Letter on Humanism*” which was written after the Second World War, Heidegger was not in support with the ideas of French philosopher “Jean Beaufref. Beaufref had earlier held that everything ends up in humanism. However, Heidegger was of the view that any form of humanism that is not rooted in being is empty. To clarify this, he went ahead to make an analysis between facticity, existentiality and forfeiture. With facticity, Heidegger sees the human being as being left in a helpless situation of disappointments, loneliness fear of death and Anxiety. Though, the choice to be in the world may not be man’s idea, he can appropriate freely within the limits of what may happen in future. Thus, it is human beings that give meaning to what is referred to as reality. There would hardly be truth within him. In existentiality, Heidegger posits that human beings exist in anticipation of his own

possibilities and he is a free agent. He tends to deal with what his present situation demands thereby seeing it as a challenge of reaching out to that which has not been achieved. He has the possibility to choose between alternatives but could lose authenticity as a human being, if he stylishly follows the mode of speech and life pattern of his social environment without his own discretion to determine what he actually wants.

Forfeiture we may disclose is the basic ontological characteristics of human being that he forgets who he is while he goes about the ephemeral particular things. Due to the things and people around him, he loses focus. Heidegger sees this as a state of life with others and for others in alienation from the central task of becoming the self. The *letter on Humanism* catalogues the vital aspects of Heidegger's perceives it was part of what emanated from it and most importantly, the need to prepare a new line of thought for people's destiny. Heidegger's focus in the *letter of Humanism* is to differentiate his existentialism from the type J.P. Sartre portrays. Heidegger believes that the concept of humanism is within the tradition of metaphysics. He believes that his philosophy of being can discover a better and authentic meaning for man.

The highest determinations of the sense of man in Humanism still do not realize the proper dignity of man. At an early period in his thinking, Heidegger seconded the question of Ethics to being. He believed that ethics can be well addressed adequately when ontological questions of *Dasein's* general mode of being were given priority. The existential analysis of death also plays a vital role in Heidegger's work *Being and Time*. Heidegger notes that the saying; 'as soon as we are born, we are old to die' is not something we should ignore. 'For how we live in light of this fact makes all the difference (Heidegger, 1962: 158).

Heidegger's problem is to investigate *Dasein* in a bid for it to yield an existential analysis that will then bring about existential possibilities of our being towards death. *Dasein* has shown to be essentially "being ahead of itself" (Heidegger, 1962: 129).

In Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy, In-authenticity is a state in which life stripped of purpose and responsibility is depersonalized and dehumanized (Blackburn, 1994). Relating this to the Heidegger's authentic idea, the in-authentic self can be seen as being closed off devoured of conscience and guilt. Heidegger also explained a twofold transition in his analysis of the authenticity and inauthenticity. He argues that we should pay proper heed to the thought that to understand '*Dasein*', we need to understand and recognize its existence as well as shift our focus from the in-authentic self to the authentic self. He further pointed out that it is *Dasein's* openness to time that allows its potential authenticity to be derived. The in-authenticity or constraints determined

by *Dasein*'s cultural historical past are held by *Dasein* in the present to enable it project itself into the future in a well groomed manner that enables the self to bring out its true worth.

Heidegger had an intricate analysis as it concerns the way in which authentic and in-authentic temporalizing can be understood being priorities of different dimensions. He posited that because there is an anticipation directed towards the future the future mixed with the projection of death, which is seen as a possibility. "The primary phenomenon of primordial and authentic temporality is the future" (Heidegger, 1962: 378). He saw in-authentic temporalizing through structures as they determined curiosity as prioritizing the present.

In critiquing the work of Heidegger, Francis Schaeffer in his book *The God who is there*, talked about changes that has taken place in the idea that man has about the truth. He emphasized that this change is "the line of despair" and he inferred that above this line of despair, men go about believing that they could achieve things on their own through reason. He noted that below the line, men have had to let go the hope of having rational and unified answers to knowledge and life.

Apart from Schaeffer's critique on Heidegger's existentialism, Existentialism in general as been considered by many to be anti-social because it gives too much primacy to the individuality of man. Existentialism as over exaggerated the value of human freedom to the point where it has become a hindrance to effective social action. Existentialism fails to realize that we are all socially conditioned. This is against the metaphysics of the Africans, whereby everything is communally conjoined. Man is seen as a being in relation and not the other way round. So man in the traditional African setting is a social being, this is because he/she see him or herself as his/her brother's keeper.

Self-Assessment Exercise

1. Heidegger's problem is to investigate _____ in a bid for it to yield an existential analysis that will then bring about existential possibilities of our being towards death.
2. _____ created a sympathetic picture of man whom he said comes into the world without his consent and without justification or reason for being.

5.4 Summary

As a way of understanding the entire discourse of this unit, it is not improbable to query: what does it take to be authentic? In addressing and answering this question it is important to justify Heidegger's position and also necessary to comprehend the term according to his own views and perceptions. Heidegger's deep interest was the relation between psychology and psychology. His research on the concept of *Dasein* contributed enormously to psychoanalytic thoughts. For Heidegger, a definite characteristic of *Dasein*'s being is the understanding of the concept of being itself. The process of unleashing possibility is what he termed as authenticity. The state of being active and dynamic thereby has the power to become one's possibility. Heidegger explains that *Dasein*'s being takes on a particular character *a priori* and exists between authentic and in-authentic disclosedness. He stated that:

Dasein exists; furthermore, Dasein is an entity which in case I myself am. Mineness belongs to any existent Dasein and belongs to it as the conditions which make authenticity and in-authenticity possible (Heidegger, 1962: 180).

Here, he posited that we cannot partake in a world determined by pragmatics and the concerns that structure the activities of *Dasein* thus the question of authenticity becomes related with the existential character of *Dasein*. Heidegger's existentialist thought, rejects any dualistic idea regarding the mind and body or distinction between subject and object. His existentialism is a search for authenticity and his theory was in contrast to the Cartesian view and suggests that what links us to the world is not knowledge rather it is moods that links us to the world. Heidegger said that mood is the starting point for understanding the nature of the self and his thoughts on *Dasein* has been related to this substance.

5.5 References/Further Reading/Web Resources

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5.6 Possible Answers to SAE

1. Dasein; 2. Heidegger

End of Module Questions

1. Plato's philosophy is called _____
2. _____ is the essence put into reality, the realization of the essential, real or concrete being
3. _____ concludes that the constant conjunction, which reveals nothing about the causal relations in the physical situation, has an influence on our minds.
4. _____ rejects the relational view that underpinned the Newtonian and Leibnizian characterization of space and time