Ibadan Distance Learning Centre Series

PHI 301
METAPHYSICS

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Study Session 1: The Metaphysics of the Pre-Socratics

Introduction

The Pre-Socratic era which essentially speaking constitute part of the ancient period presents a metaphysics that has at its base the search for the ultimate stuff of the world. It attempts to discover the principles that are fundamental to being. Some of the figures notable in this period include, Thales, Anaximander, Anaximenes, Heraclitus, Parmenides, Anaxagoras and a host of others.

For some, the question was whether this substance was one or many, while for other it was whether the condition was fixed or changing. And so, the inquiry into the nature of reality in the Pre-Socratics oscillated between singularity and pluralism, on the one hand, and permanence and change on the other.

In this study session, you will be introduced to the metaphysics of the Pre-Socratics, reality as change and conflict. You will also learn about Atomists.

Learning Outcomes for Study Session 1

When you have studied this session, you should be able to:

1.1 Discuss the Milesian Philosophers

1.2 Explain ‘Reality’ as change and conflict

1.3 Briefly explain the Atomists

1.1 The Milesian Philosophers

What can be referred to as the fundamental problem that the Pre-Socratics tried to address is best represented in the various renditions beginning with the Milesian thinkers, that is, Thales, Anaximander and Anaximenes. Thales' concern was to find the unity that underlies all the multiplicity of things in our experience. This is sometimes called the problem of "the one and the many".

In the world you encounter many things: fish, sand, stars, rocks, plants and so on. The question then is what is it that unifies them all? Why do you consider this a universe and not a multiverse? What basic principle accounts for all these? What fundamental "stuff" underlies everything we find in the world? This is the primary issue that occupies all the Pre-Socratic philosophers.

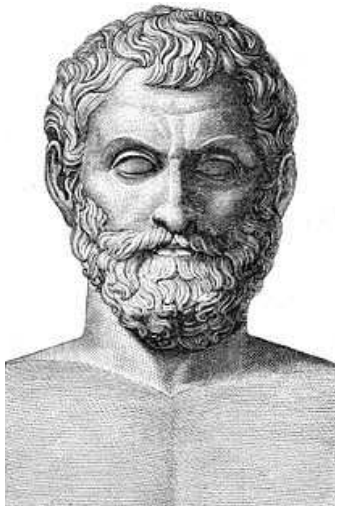

Figure 1.1: Portrait of Thales (624 BC - 546 BC)

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thales

The answer Thales gives, Aristotle tells you are that water is the source of all things. At first, this answer may seem naïve and improbable. However, before you criticize any of these early philosophers, you must remember that you are standing on top of twenty five hundred years of philosophical speculation and scientific discoveries. Hence these early attempts to answer these questions are remarkable in their originality and brilliance.

Aristotle speculates that Thales reasoned from the fact that water is essential to life, and the seed of all things are moist to the conclusion that water is the fundamental element. Another reason may have also occurs to Thales to support his conclusion that everything is transformed water.

For example, liquid water can be transformed into gas (steam) and it also can be changed into a solid (ice).

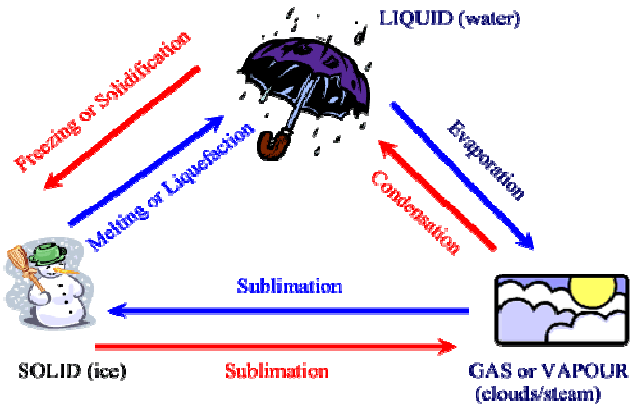

Figure 1.2: Change of state of water

Source: http://www.clickandlearn.org/gr9_sci/particle_theory.htm

Furthermore, water comes from the air in the form of rain and returns back to the air as moist. When water evaporates from a dish, it leaves sediment (apparently turning into earth), while digging down into the earth lead you to water.

Finally, living in Miletus and being surrounded by water may have made seem probable to Thales that everything comes from water. Although nobody know what Thales' real argument were, the fact that his immediate successors offered rational support for their theories make it likely the Thales did also.[1]

Some further issues are involved in Thales speculation. If water is the one permanent and basic substance, what cause the change in water's appearance that transforms into all the other things in our experience? This is the question of "permanence and change" or "being and becoming".

Meanwhile, a possible answer in Thales' claim is that all things are "full of gods". Contrary to appearances, it is like that he was reverting to a naïve theological explanation here. He noticed, for example, that magnetic stones have the power to move iron. He considered this power to be an animate causal agent in seemingly inert stone.

Thus, he seemed to believe that the principle of animation and change resides in things themselves. However, the only vocabulary he had for expressing this was to say that things are alive and divinely animated in some fashion.

[1] Cf. William Lawhead, *The Voyage of Discovery* (New York:Wadsworth Publishing Company, 2001), p. 26

- ■ What was the primary issue that occupies all the Pre-Socratic philosophers?
- □ The issue was what fundamental "stuff" underlies everything we find in the world?

Anaximander took up Thales' task by addressing the question "what is the single basic stuff that is fundamental to all other things?" Notice that Anaximander absorbed Thales' assumption that the key to the universe will be a single type of entity. Anaximander was not satisfied with Thales solution, however.

Water is just another particular thing that you find in the world along with earth, air, and fire. How can one kind of thing explain all the other things? It is a contradiction to suppose that something that is clearly not water (for example, fish), really is water. Whatever is fundamental and universal cannot have the particular properties water has. Water itself needs to be explained.[2] Thus, with Anaximander the process of philosophical criticism begins.

Figure 1.3: Portrait of Anaximander (610 BC – 546 BC)

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anaximander

According to Anaximander, the ultimate reality must be an eternal imperishable source from which all things are made to which all things return. This ultimate ground of all things is the *apeiron*, which means the Boundless, the Infinite, or the Indefinite. It is without any internal boundaries or divisions and is a space-filling, dynamic mass.

It is infinite in time; otherwise it would have to be something more fundamental that produced it. Furthermore, it is indefinite in quantity. The boundless can be thought of as a reservoir from

[2] Cf. William Lawhead, *The Voyage of Discovery*, p. 26

which all things and their qualities are produced. But what are the properties that describe it? Is it cold? No, Anaximander would say, for then it could not produce the property of heat.

Is it wet? No, for then it could not produce the property of dryness. Since it contains or produces all specific properties, it itself cannot be identified with any one of them. Hence, it is undefinable, since we can only define things that have specific properties.[3]

Anaximander has a much more developed theory of change than did Thales. He says the world is made up of warring opposites (cold vs. heat, night vs. day) since they are opposite, one cannot give birth to the other, but they must all come from something else more fundamental. Therefore, change is the process of various qualities separating out from and returning to the primordial substance.

Figure 1.4: Warring opposites (Night and Day)

Source: http://www.desktopwallpapers4.me/digital-art/night-and-day-5445/

Originally, everything was part of the whirling mass of the boundless, and in the act of creation the different qualities where flung out it much as particles are separating out from the solution in a centrifuge. This whirling motion explains how the planet originally received their motion. Through this process all the warring opposites, such as hot and cold, wet and dry were produced. Combinations of these qualities produced the object in our experience.

For example, from the combination of cold and wet came the earth and clouds. From the hot and dry came a ring of fire that enclosed the whole. This burst into smaller rings of fire, creating the heavenly bodies. From the warm and the wet came life. Interestingly, Anaximander included a primitive evolutionary theory in his account of the world, claiming that all life forms, including humans, originally came from the sea.

[3] Cf. Bertrand Russell, *History of Western Philosophy* (London, Routledge, 1995), p. 46

He however gave a very modern answer to the age old problem. What does the earth rest on? His answer was that it rest on nothing. Since the earth is the centre of a spherical universe, it has no reason to go one way or another. Since any direction is equally attractive it stays were it is.

Anaximander recognizes that from the standpoint of the universe as a whole there can be no absolute directions of up or down. For him the universe is an everlasting motion made up of this circle of creation and destruction, and so it is regarded as the first philosophical account of the cyclical view of history.

Although in his attempting to give a natural explanation of things he retains the notion of a moral force in the universe. He uses the principle of justice to explain the world circle. Since everything "borrowed its existence form the Boundless, it must return the loan. Hence, everything ultimately returns it to the original source.

- ■ According to Anaximander, what is change?
- ☐ Change is the process of various qualities separating out from and returning to the primordial substance.

As with his fellow Milesian, Anaximenes is concerned with the question "what is the basic substance that is the foundation of all reality? He agrees with Anaximander that the basic reality must eternal, unlimited, and singular. However, (continuing the process of philosophical criticism) he finds his colleagues answer to be inadequate.

Figure 1.5: Portrait of Anaximenes of Miletus (585 BC – 528 BC)

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anaximenes_of_Miletus

To say that the basic reality is the boundless is not to say much at all. If there is a basic substance, we must be able to say something about it if you know that it there at all.[4] Thus, using the criterion of clarity, Anaximenes has the task of finding a less vague and more convincing answer to the question.

The answer he gives is simple; the basic reality is air. He may have come to this theory on the basis of several observations.

i. Air is much more pervasive that water, so it is a better candidate for the fundamental substance.
ii. Air is central to all nature. It is necessary for the existence of fire and can be found in water and in the earth.
iii. He may have noticed that water falls when not supported, but air is self-supporting. Therefore, water cannot support the air as Thales claimed. However, since air can support itself it can conceivable support the heavenly bodies as well. Just as a light breeze can makes a leave float.
iv. Finally, air supports life. It is the primary difference between the living and the dead. Anaximenes believed that the soul was identical to air. When you breathe our last breath and then expire, air (which is the soul leaves the body).[5]

Anaximenes accounted for the process of change by principles that produce changes in the density of the basic substance. One is rarefaction (or expansion), and the other is condensation (compression). For example, extremely rarefied air becomes warm and eventually becomes fire.

[4] Cf. Bertrand Russell, *History of Western Philosophy* (London: Routledge, 1995), p. 47

[5] Cf. William Lawhead, *The Voyage of Discovery*, p. 27

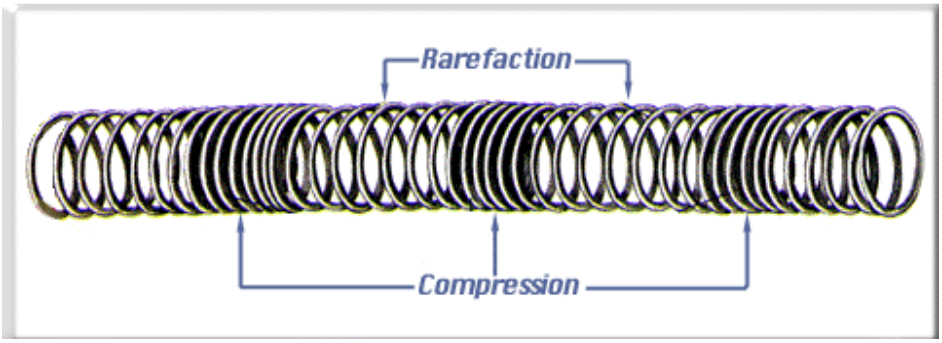

Figure 1.6: Showing rarefaction and Compression in a spring

Source: http://www.lcse.umn.edu/specs/labs/glossary_items/rarefaction_spring.html

As air becomes increasingly condensed, it becomes colder and successively changes in to wind, water, earth, and finally stone. Not content to simply throw out opinions, Anaximenes provides the first recorded scientific experiment to provide evidence for his claim.

He observed that when you open your mouth wide and blow on your hand, your breath will feel warm. But when you close your mouth as if you are going to whistle and blow on your hand your condensed breath feels cold. Hence, by appealing to the quantitative changes produced by rarefaction and condensation, he believes you can account for the qualitative changes in the world.[6]

- ■ Did Anaximenes agree with Anaximander, yes or no?
- ☐ Yes but he still found his answer inadequate

[6] Cf. Bertrand Russell, *History of Western Philosophy*, p. 47

1.2 Reality as change and conflict

The Milesians sought for the one material substance, the fundamental "stuff" that was permanent throughout all the changing appearances. For them, permanence was fundamental and change was a secondary phenomenon. However, according to Heraclitus they had it all backward. He asserted that change is ultimate and most of our experiences of stability and permanence are merely how things *appear* to be.

Heraclitus criticized our tendency to divide the world into separate and distinct *things*. You talk of coins, fish, olive, rocks and many particular things, but these are not what are ultimate. To focus in on a very ordinary example, you commonly talk about "the weather" with your acquaintances. This noun gives you the impression that you are referring to some distinct objects.

Figure 1.7: Heraclitus of Ephesus (535 BC – 475 BC)

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heraclitus

However you know that "the weather" is really a collection of many different interacting processes:

1. High and low pressure,
2. Fronts,
3. Humidity,
4. Temperature,
5. Precipitation,
6. Wind direction, and
7. Velocity

Heraclitus suggested that all the "objects" you talk about are really a collection of processes. He used the metaphor of a river to make his point.[7] Although, scholars are divided on what his exact words were, he said something to the effect the "you cannot step into the same river twice".
In one sense, the river may seem to be the same over time. You can identify it by name, such as "the Niger river". However in another sense, why the name remains the same, the waters are constantly changing and you are not dealing with the same physical entity. One writer in the first century A.D quoted Heraclitus as saying "we step and do not step into the same rivers, we are and we are not."[8]

- ■ Differentiate between permanence and change
- ☐ While permanence was fundamental, change is a secondary phenomenon

1.3 The Atomists

The founder of the Atomist movement is thought to be a philosopher by the name of Leucippus, of which we know very little. Therefore, Democritus (460-360 B.C) is the source for most of the Atomist's ideas. According to the Atomist, two principles explain reality; atoms and the void.
Notice that by making the void or empty space a component of being, the Atomists disagree with Parmenides, for they are claiming that what-is-not does exist. Atoms have several features. First, they are indivisible, eternal and unchanging (making them almost small editions of Parmenidian Being).

Figure 1.8: Portrait of Democritus

[7] Cf. William Lawhead, *The Voyage of Discovery*, p. 29
[8] Cf. William Lawhead, *Voyage of Discovery*, p. 31

Source: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Democritus

However, they are infinity in number (the unlimited expanse of space allowed this). Second, there are quantitative differences between them, that is, they come in various sizes and shapes. Third, they are qualitatively alike or neutral, that is, they have no colour, taste, temperature or odour.[9]

Change was understood as a result of the differing relationships between the atoms. Democritus' arguments concerning change are as follows:

1. There is no up or down in any absolute sense, and, therefore, motion is directionless.
2. It follows that atoms do not have weight in any absolute sense.
3. Since there is no natural, final resting place for the atoms, the motion of atoms is eternal.

Aristotle was not satisfied with this answer and complained, "They lazily sheaved the question of the origin of motion."

The world we see about us can be explained on the bases of the previous principles:

1. The motion of the atoms and their geometrical properties produce
2. Various interactions and combinations that produce
3. All the qualities found in sense experience. For example, solid matter results when atoms that have rough surfaces or hooks become interlocked. Liquids are made up of spherical atoms with smooth surfaces that continually roll over one another. Sweet-tasting substances are made up of smooth atoms, while bitter herbs, of course, are made up of atoms with sharp point that irritates our mouth atoms.[10]

For Democritus, there is no ordering principle in the world. What patterns there seem to be are simply products of the material properties of atoms and the chance collisions that result from their motions.[11]

Activity 1.1: Change

Time allowed: 45 minutes

What is the role of permanence or change in being and becoming?

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[9] Cf. Joshua C. Gregory, *A Short History of Atomism* (London: A. and C. Black, Ltd, 1981), p. 45

[10] Cf. Sylvia Berryman, "Democritus', *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2008 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2008/entries/democritus

[11] Cf. Sylvia Berryman, "Democritus", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2008 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2008/entries/democritus

Summary of Study Session 1

In Study Session 1, you have learnt that:

1. The philosophers that preceded Socrates set philosophy in motion by offering arguments for their theories and by criticizing one another. Although their arguments are not always cogent, they did present reasons for their positions as well as for the refutations of their contemporaries.
2. This was a great advance over previous explanations of the universe, which simply relied on the non-critical transmission of the mythical and poetic traditions of the culture. However, along with their insights came with a number of problems.
3. The wide range of conflicting opinions that developed during this period would lead the next age of philosophers to be very sceptical about whether you could even arrive at any truth that were more than simply personal opinions.

Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs) for Study Session 1

Now that you have completed this study session, you can assess how well you have achieved its Learning outcomes by answering the following questions. Write your answers in your study Diary and discuss them with your Tutor at the next! Support meeting. You can check your answers with the Notes on the Self-Assessment questions at the end of this Module.

SAQ 1.1

1. What was the answer of Anaximenes to the pre-Socratic question?
2. What were his observations?

SAQ 1.2

How did Heraclitus explain change?

SAQ 1.3

How did Democritus' saw change?

Notes on Study Session 1

SAQ 1.1

1. The answer he gives is simple; the basic reality is air.
2. He may have come to this theory on the basis of several observations.

First, air is much more pervasive that water, so it is a better candidate for the fundamental substance.

Second, air is central to all nature. It is necessary for the existence of fire and can be found in water and in the earth.

Third, he may have noticed that water falls when not supported, but air is self-supporting. Therefore, water cannot support the air as Thales claimed. However, since air can support itself it can conceivable support the heavenly bodies as well. Just as a light breeze can makes a leave float.

Finally, air supports life. It is the primary difference between the living and the dead. Anaximenes believed that the soul was identical to air. When you breathe our last breath and then expire, air (which is the soul leaves the body).[12]

SAQ 1.2

Heraclitus they had it all backward. He asserted that change is ultimate and most of our experiences of stability and permanence are merely how things *appear* to be.

SAQ 1.3

Democritus' arguments on change are as follows:

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References

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Berryman, Sylvia, "Democritus." *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2008 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2008/entries/democritus

[12] Cf. William Lawhead, *The Voyage of Discovery*, p. 27

Study Session 2: Plato's Metaphysics

Introduction

Plato's theory of reality or metaphysics is perhaps one of the most commonly discussed in philosophy. The central crux of Plato's metaphysics has to do with the view that the external world that you live in is temporary, transient, changing, and therefore unreal. For this reason, the world of observation is not knowable.

For him, the world of reality is the world of forms or the world of ideas. As he argued, whereas the external world is the world of appearance, the world of forms is the world of reality, where permanent, universally acceptable, unchanging, and perfect ideas and ideals are found. The world of observation for Plato is essentially a world of imitations; poor imitations for that matter, of what you have in the world of forms.

In this study session, you will learn about Plato's metaphysics, the problem of change and Plato's Dualism.

Learning Outcomes for Study Session 2

When you have studied this session, you should be able to:

2.1 Discuss the central arguments of Plato's metaphysics

2.2 Explain Plato's Dualism

2.1 Plato's Metaphysics

Plato was Socrates' student, and founded the Academy in Athens, the first institution of higher learning in the Western world. Along with Socrates and his most famous student, Aristotle, Plato helped to lay the foundations of Western philosophy and science.

Plato defined metaphysics as the knowledge of the supra-sensible; as the study of reality as distinct from appearance.[13] He opines that Metaphysics takes us beyond the material world to reality itself in the world of Forms. This presupposition is also evident in the metaphysics of Parmenides, Spinoza, Hegel and F. H. Bradley.[14]

Plato's metaphysics can be viewed as an interesting blend of some of the philosophers, such as Heraclitus, before him. Heraclitus maintained that all of reality is in a flux and is constantly changing and Plato agreed that when it came to the world that is experienced through the senses that Heraclitus was right.

Plato, however, believed that there was a more fundamental reality that can be known by reason and this reality does not change. He called this non-changing reality the "World of Forms", which he believed was more real than the world of the senses. It is very difficult to separate Plato's epistemology from his metaphysics because they are so closely connected.

[13] Cf. P. Iroegbu, *Metaphysics: The Kpim of Philosophy* (Owerri: International University Press Ltd., 1995), p. 22

[14] Cf. J. I. Omoregbe, *Metaphysics without Tears*, Tears (Lagos: Joja Educational Research and Publishers Ltd., 1999), p. Xiii

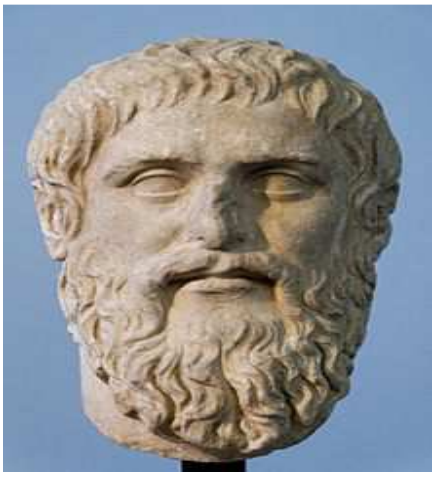

Figure 2.1: Portrait of Plato

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plato

The two realms of existence, as Plato saw them, are directly related to how you come to know things. There is an important difference between the knower and the known. The knowing aspect will be a central focus in epistemology, while the objects that can be known will be central to metaphysics. Meanwhile, 'the divided line' allow you to clearly distinguish between the two different disciplines.

- ■ Any difference between Plato's epistemology and his metaphysics
- ☐ No because they are so closely connected

2.1.1 The Reality of Plato's World of Forms

Plato's world of the Forms is unchanging and the foundation for the physical world. The idea of the World of Forms can be considered to be Plato's attempt to work out Socrates' insights, which led him to pursue the metaphysical foundations of these insights. He shared Socrates' concern to capture universal concepts in carefully constructed and rationally derived definitions.

However, Socrates never had much interest in metaphysics. So he never paid much attention to the question of what sort of reality these Universals or Forms have. Plato, however, argued that if the Forms are the true objects of knowledge, then knowledge must be of something real.

Therefore, the Forms are the true objects of knowledge, and then knowledge must be of something real; they must be objective, independently existing realities. If the Forms are real,

then where do they exist? The question is meaningless because 'where' and 'when' questions apply only to spatiotemporal objects.

You cannot ask, for example, where the multiplication tables exist. True, you have them in our minds and write them on our blackboards. But if our minds forgot them and the copies were destroyed, the truths in the multiplication tables would still endure. You did not even create them, but discovered them. Hence, they do not depend on our minds for existence.[15]

- ■ Did Plato's shared Socrates' concern to capture universal concepts
- ☐ Yes he shared his concern to capture universal concepts in carefully constructed and rationally derived definitions.

2.1.2 The Problem of Change

Plato was also driven to metaphysics by the problems that were left unresolved by philosophers who had first examined them. Looming large among these problems was the problem of change. Like a pebble in one's shoe, it was a constant irritant in Greek philosophy that refused to go away.

[15] Cf. William Lawhead, *Voyage of Discovery*, p.67

Box 2.1: Paradox about change.
When you visit relatives whom you have not seen since you were very young, they may say, 'See how you have changed!' But what are they saying? Obviously, they are saying you are different from the way you were. However, you are not different from your younger self in the way you are different from your sister. In some sense you are the same person. You are the same, and you are not the same.

Both Heraclitus and Parmenides sought to dissolve the paradox of change with extreme solutions. Heraclitus said that everything in the world of experience is changing and permanence is merely an illusion. Parmenides and his fellow Eleatics eliminated the problem by claiming that permanence is fundamental and change is merely an appearance.

Figure 2.2: Portrait of Parmenides of Elea

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parmenides

Although their positions were diametrically opposed, both assumed monism – the claim that reality is essentially one sort of thing. If the Heraclitean position is correct, then, knowledge is impossible because there is nothing stable about the world that you could know. Yet Parmenides' solution is not satisfactory either, because change is obviously a fact of life.

Plato believes that they are both wrong and they are both right. They are wrong in their monism, because they too quickly assume that all reality is one sort of thing. However, they are each right in describing one-half of the entire pictures of reality. Plato was a genius at synthesizing the

insights of his predecessors. He adopted their insights but modified them to eliminate their weaknesses.[16]

In seeking a compromise between Heraclitus and Parmenides, Plato embraced *metaphysical dualism*, which is the claim that there are two completely different kinds of reality. His solution is to propose that there is a world in constant flux, at the same time there is a world that is eternal and unchanging.

The world of flux is the physical world that you encounter in sense experience. Because it is constantly changing, you cannot have rational knowledge of it. The world that is eternal and unchanging is a non-physical reality. It is not located in space or time.

Plato sometimes refers to this as the 'intelligible world' because only this reality is intelligible to reason. And so, for Plato, there are two kinds of reality. The physical world is less real than the world of Forms and depends on the higher world. The reality that transcends experience produces whatever order and reality you find in the world of experience.

Activity 2.1: Change and Permanence

Time allowed: 1 hour

What do you understand by the phenomena of permanence and change in the world of observation?

2.2 Plato's Dualism

Plato's dualist position of the nature of reality can be represented thus:

1. The World of the Senses (The Physical World)
    a. Physical Objects: Ordinary objects you perceive
    b. Images: shadows, reflections and pictures
2. The World of Forms
    a. Higher Forms: Here you find ethical forms
    b. Lower Forms: Here you find mathematical forms

[16] Cf. William Lawhead, *Voyage of Discovery*, p. 68

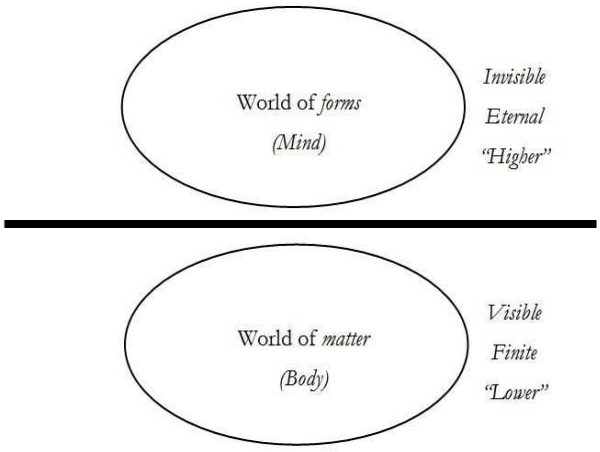

Figure 2.3: Plato Dualism

Source: http://merediscip le.com/2011/06/the-transforming-vision-part-two/

An interesting development of Plato's dualism is the idea that there are different degrees of reality. In the physical world, physical objects are more real than say images of physical objects, such as shadows. Another important aspect is the dependency factor.

The shadows depend for their existence on physical objects. The lower Forms depend for their existence on the higher Forms. Plato's metaphysics of Forms are the 'real' has come under a number of criticisms. One of such criticisms came from his student, Aristotle, who posited the concepts, 'matter' and 'form' in a composite to account for change in phenomena things, as well as the possibility of knowledge in the world of flux.

- ■ In the Plato's dualism, the objects you see around you falls under?
- ☐ Physical Objects

The theory of Forms (or theory of Ideas) typically refers to the belief that the material world as it seems to us is not the real world, but only an "image" or "copy" of the real world. In some of Plato's dialogues, this is expressed by Socrates, who spoke of forms in formulating a solution to the problem of universals.

The forms, according to Socrates, are archetypes or abstract representations of the many types of things, and properties you feel and see around us that can only be perceived by reason. (That is, they are universals.) In other words, Socrates was able to recognize two worlds: the apparent

world, which constantly changes, and an unchanging and unseen world of forms, which may be the cause of what, is apparent.

Activity 2.2: World of forms

Time allowed: 45 minutes

How do you think you can access Plato's world of Forms?

Summary of Study Session 2

In Study Session 2, you have learnt that:

1. The basic tenets and arguments of Plato's metaphysics or theory of reality. It examined the dualism in Plato's metaphysics; a dualism that distinguishes the world of appearance, which is the external world that you live, and the world of reality which Plato calls the world of forms, consisting of ideals and perfections of which what you have in the external world are poor imitations.

2. The lecture goes further to characterize the content of items in both worlds and conclude by categorizing Plato's metaphysics and Idealist realism or Realist idealism, sometimes known as Objective idealism.

Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs) for Study Session 2

Now that you have completed this study session, you can assess how well you have achieved its Learning outcomes by answering the following questions. Write your answers in your study Diary and discuss them with your Tutor at the next! Support meeting. You can check your answers with the Notes on the Self-Assessment questions at the end of this Module.

SAQ 2.1

How did Plato see Heraclitus and Parmenides stand on change?

SAQ 2.2

Write briefly on criticism of Plato's metaphysics of forms

Notes on Study Session 2

SAQ 2.1

Plato believes that they are both wrong and they are both right. They are wrong in their monism, because they too quickly assume that all reality is one sort of thing. However, they are each right in describing one-half of the entire pictures of reality. He adopted their insights but modified them to eliminate their weaknesses.

SAQ 2.2

Plato's metaphysics of Forms are the 'real' has come under a number of criticisms. One of such criticisms came from his student, Aristotle, who posited the concepts, 'matter' and 'form' in a composite to account for change in phenomena things, as well as the possibility of knowledge in the world of flux.

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Study Session 3: Aristotle's Metaphysics

Introduction

According to Bertrand Russell, Aristotle's metaphysics is Plato diluted with common sense. In general, Aristotle, in his theory of reality, represents an opposition and option to Plato's metaphysics.

The point of divergence of Aristotle from Plato is perhaps best understood in the position of Aristotle which argues that objects in the external world are not imitations of their ideals in the world of forms, but rather, the forms are united with objects of the observable world. In other words, form is united with matter to culminate in a unity of reality.

In this study session, you will learn about the unique nature of Aristotle's metaphysics with particular reference to his status as an opposition and an alternative to Plato and the notions of substance; form and matter as represented in Aristotle's metaphysics.

Learning Outcomes for Study Session 3

When you have studied this session, you should be able to:

3.1 Explain the unique nature of Aristotle's metaphysics

3.2 Discuss the concept Substance and Accident

3.1 Aristotle's Metaphysics

Aristotle conceives 'Metaphysics' as the science which investigates 'being as being', as well as the attributes which belong to this in virtue of its own nature.[17] It is the first science, for it is logically prior to and presupposed by all sciences. For him, it furnishes man with the most profound and most comprehensive knowledge about reality, and it is the highest science, for it explains things in light of their highest causes.[18]

Figure 3.1: Aristotle (384 BC –322 BC)

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aristotle

For Aristotle, metaphysics is a discipline that is concerned with being qua being and the knowledge of first causes; and it involves the attempt to identify the most general kinds or categories under which things fall and to delineate the relations that hold among those categories.[19]

As a theoretical discipline, whose goal is the apprehension of truth for its own sake, metaphysics has as its subject matter immaterial substance. What makes metaphysics a universal science is that it considers all objects that exist, and the fact that it examines the items that constitute the subject matter for other sciences.[20]

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[17] Cf. Jesse A. Mann et al, *Perspective on Reality* (U.S.A: Harcourt, Brace & World Inc., 1996), p.70

[18] Cf. J. I Omoregbe, Metaphysics Without Tears (Lagos: Joja Educational Research and Publishers Ltd., 1999), p. xi

[19] Cf. M. J. Louix, *Metaphysics: A Contemporary Introduction,* 3rd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2002), p.1

[20] Cf. M. J. Louix, *Metaphysics: A Contemporary Introduction,* 3rd ed., p.3

Aristotle's *Metaphysics* is about the question, "What is being?" in two ways. On the one hand, when Aristotle raises this question, he undertakes a long search for an answer to it and eventually he offers an answer. On the other hand, he also reflects on the question itself, what it is to raise it and to search for an answer to it, and even whether it is possible to search for an answer at all.[21]

- ■ To Aristotle, what is metaphysics
- ☐ To Aristotle, metaphysics is a discipline that is concerned with being qua being and the knowledge of first causes

3.1.1 Matter and Form

According to Aristotle, every object in the universe is composed of some form of an underlying stuff called 'matter'. The matter of each kind of object has the potentiality for acquiring a form proper to the object, called its 'end' or goal. The process of change or motion is the actualizing of the potentiality of the object.

Matter, in its pure state, would have no characteristics whatsoever, but it is that which is capable of being 'informed' – of assuming various forms. The matter of the acorn and oak has the potentiality of receiving different forms, of having one form at one time, and another at a later time. The form of the object at any given time is its actuality – what it has become at the particular moment.[22]

Figure 3.2: Acorn and Oak

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oak+acorn

[21] Cf. Vasilis Politis, *Routledge Philosophy Guidebook to Aristotle and the Metaphysics* (London: Routledge, 2004), p. 2

[22] Cf. Richard H. Popkin, and Avrum Stroll, *Philosophy Made* Simple (New York: Doubleday, 1993), p.104

All objects have a permanent nature, which persists through its realization or acquisition of different forms. Each and every object can be understood only in terms of both its matter and its form, and the process by which it grows, alters, or moves, that is, replaces one form with another.

The permanent aspect of an object never exists independently or without assuming some form. The object always is in some state and is in process of reaching some other state. Thus, the formal, changing aspect and the material, permanent aspect of any object are always present and always constitute the basis for any explanation of what is occurring.[23]

Box 3.1: Recall

Recall that Plato held a dualist position in which reality consisted of two worlds. The world of the Forms was nonphysical, eternal, unchanging, and known only by reason; the world of our everyday experience was material, temporal, constantly changing, and known through the senses.

The first world, according to Plato, is what is ultimately real, whereas the world of our experience is like a collection of shadows.[24] For Aristotle, however, Form was always the form of matter of some kind; the essence was always in some object, giving it its nature and properties. Therefore, Plato's duplication of the real world was not necessary for Aristotle.

Aristotle's understanding of Form is really a critique of Plato's metaphysics. In his *Metaphysics*, he (Aristotle) argued that Forms are useless, in the sense that instead of explaining the natural world, Plato's theory creates a second world, thereby doubling the number of things that requires explanation. Instead of bringing some unity to the multiplicity of things in experience, it complicates matters by introducing more multiplicity.

Aristotle argued further that the Forms cannot explain change or the movement of things within our experience. For him, it could be said that our lives are lived in a changing world, and you need to make some sense out of it. Therefore, if the unchanging Forms are the basis for all explanation, then the whole study of nature has been annihilated.[25]

As a result, for Aristotle, the Forms cannot be the essence or substance of things if they are separated from them. He said that it is not clear what it means for particulars to 'participate' in

[23] Cf. Richard H. Popkin, and Avrum Stroll, *Philosophy Made* Simple, p.105

[24] Cf. William Lawhead, *Voyage of Discovery*, p. 91

[25] Cf. William Lawhead, *Voyage of Discovery*, p.91

the Forms. To say that the Forms are patterns and that particulars share in them 'is to use empty words and poetical metaphors'.

The above explanation shows that Aristotle rejects the Plato's theory of Forms. Aristotle concludes that you can dispense with the Forms, for they are mere sound without sense; and even if there are such things, they are not relevant to our discussion.

But he agrees with Plato that there are universal forms that are objective and that constitute the essences of things in the world. It is because of these forms that you are able to have knowledge, and that the order in reality can only be explained by reference to the forms.[26]

- ■ Relate Aristotle's understanding of Form and Plato's metaphysics
- ☐ Aristotle's understanding of Form was a critique of Plato's metaphysics

3.1.2 The Doctrine of Essence and the Theory of Universals

The doctrine of essences is the basis of Aristotle's theory of *potentiality.* The essence or form of a thing may be buried in it as, for instance, the potentiality of an acorn to grow into an oak. The oak in its developed form is the complete manifestation of the form or ideal originality latent in the seed.

Aristotle rejected Plato's claim that there are two worlds, world of forms and world of matter. For Aristotle, there is no second realm apart from particulars inhabited wholly by universals. Universals are not to be found in another world nor in our mind, they are not 'out there', and their existence is in no way dependent on minds or whether or not there were no minds to apprehend them.

According to Aristotle, a universal is simply a property that is common to a number of instances. One arrives at the concept of these properties by a process of abstraction from particulars. It's then obvious that there could be no universal without particulars, just as there could be no particulars without universals. The two are logically dependent on one another. Universals exist only *in re* (in things), not, as in Plato, *ante rem* (prior to things).[27]

3.2 Substance and Accident

[26] Cf. William Lawhead, *Voyage of Discovery*, p. 92

[27] Cf. John Hospers, *An Introduction to Philosophical Analysis* (New York: Taylor & Francis, 1990), p. 354

By ‘substance’, it is understood as “that which stands beneath”. That is, that which exists of its own, yet, ‘holds’ other things; which others things in here. Furthermore, substance is what is predicated neither of, nor in anything else. This captures the fundamental notion that substances are basic, and everything else is predicated either of, or in them.

Now, if you transpose this logical definition of substance to the realm of metaphysics, where existence is taken into consideration, you can say that a substance is that whose nature it is to exist not in some subject or as a part of anything else, but what exists in itself.

Thus, a substance is a properly basic entity, existing *per se* (though of course depending on an external cause for its existence), and the paradigm instances of which are the medium sized objects that you see around us: horses, cats, trees and humans. On the other hand there are accidents.

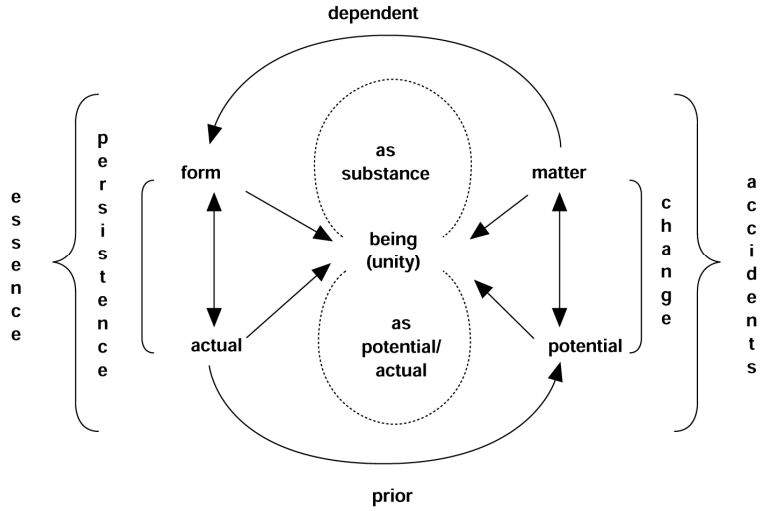

Figure 3.3: Substance and Accident

Source: http://www.emeraldinsight.com/content_images/fig/0670280609003.png

Accidents are what accrue to substances and modify substances in some way. Logically speaking, accidents are predicated of, or in some substance. Metaphysically speaking, accidents cannot exist in themselves but only as part of some substance.

As their name suggests, accidents are incidental to the thing, and they can come and go without the thing losing its identity; whereas a thing cannot cease to be the substance that it is without losing its identity. And so, accidents only exist as part of some substance.

It follows then that you cannot have un-exemplified properties as if they were substances in themselves. Properties are always exemplified by some substance, whereas substance itself is un-exemplifiable.

For example, brown is always predicated of something, you say that *x* is brown, in which case brown is an accident. However, brown is never found to be in itself, it is always exemplified by something of which it is said.

Box 3.2: Kinds of substances
For Aristotle, there are three kinds of substances: those that are sensible and perishable, those that are sensible but not perishable, and those that are neither sensible nor perishable.
The first class includes plants and animals,
The second includes the heavenly bodies (which Aristotle believed to undergo no change except motion), The third includes the rational soul in man, and also God.

The place of the idea of 'substance' in Aristotle's philosophy is brought to the fore by his argument for a First Cause (which has been employed to argue for God's existence). Put simply, the argument is that there must be something which originates motion, and this something must itself be unmoved, and must be eternal, substance, and actuality.

And so, there is a substance which is eternal and unmoved and separate from sensible things. This substance cannot have any magnitude, and it is without parts and invisible.[28] So, Aristotle employs one of the understandings of substance to argue for the existence of a First Cause.

Summary of Study Session 3

In Study Session 3, you have learnt that:

1. The basic line of argument of Aristotle was traced with reference to his thought of reality. It was argued that Aristotle's metaphysics is an attempt to unite form and matter in any given reality, form given a stronger status of reality than matter.
2. Aristotle understands of substance and concludes by saying that the only reality you have is the natural world around us.

[28] Cf. Bertrand Russell, *History of Western Philosophy* (London: Routledge, 1995), p. 180

Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs) for Study Session 3

Now that you have completed this study session, you can assess how well you have achieved its Learning outcomes by answering the following questions. Write your answers in your study Diary and discuss them with your Tutor at the next! Support meeting. You can check your answers with the Notes on the Self-Assessment questions at the end of this Module.

SAQ 3.1

To what extent did Aristotle succeed in re-explaining Plato's metaphysics?

SAQ 3.2

What are the types of substances according Aristotle?

Notes on Study Session 3

SAQ 3.1

According to Aristotle, a universal is simply a property that is common to a number of instances. One arrives at the concept of these properties by a process of abstraction from particulars. It's then obvious that there could be no universal without particulars, just as there could be no particulars without universals. The two are logically dependent on one another. Universals exist only *in re* (in things), not, as in Plato, *ante rem* (prior to things)

SAQ 3.2

There are three kinds of substances:

1. Those that are sensible and perishable includes: plants and animals

2. Those that are sensible but not perishable includes: the heavenly bodies (which Aristotle believed to undergo no change except motion)

3. Those that are neither sensible nor perishable includes: rational soul in man, and also God.

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Study Session 4: The Metaphysics of Thomas Aquinas

Introduction

Metaphysics is taken by Thomas Aquinas, like Aristotle, to be the study of being *qua* being, that is, a study of the most fundamental aspects of being that constitute a being and without which it could not be. Aquinas's metaphysical thought follows a modified, but generally Aristotlean view.

For Aquinas, a thing cannot be unless it possesses an act of being, and the thing that possesses an act of being is thereby rendered an essence/existence composite. If an essence has an act of being, the act of being is limited by that essence whose act it is. The essence in itself is the definition of a thing; and the paradigm instances of essence/existence composites are material substances.

In this study session, you will learn the unique nature of Aquinas' metaphysics. The notions of substance and accident, form and matter are to be appreciated as represented in Aquinas' metaphysics**.**

Learning Outcomes for Study Session 4

When you have studied this session, you should be able to:

4.1 Explain the unique nature of Aquinas' metaphysics.

4.2 Discuss Essence and Existence in Aquinas' metaphysics

4.3 Briefly explain form and matter in Aquinas' metaphysics

4.4 Explain the notions of substance and accident in Aquinas' metaphysics

4.1 The Metaphysics of Thomas Aquinas

St. Thomas Aquinas conceives metaphysics as the ultimate explanation of the mystery of being – visible and invisible, in the ultimate Being, which is God.[29] Whenever you mention the name of God, the idea of a transcendental being readily comes to your mind. And this transcendence is often characterized by timelessness, lack of spartial extension of location, utter simplicity and independence.[30]

Meanwhile, you are also fond of making claims such as "God is good", "God is wise", "God loves everyone", "God knows all things", "God wills good for his creature", "God acts in a just manner", and so forth. All these statements ascribe properties and activities to God, and even describe Him in anthropomorphic terms.

Figure 4.1: Thomas Aquinas (1225 – 7 March 1274)

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Aquinas

The questions raised in this regard are:

1. How can you talk about God as transcendent and God as a person without involving ourselves in contradiction?
2. In what sense do you use terms such as 'knows', 'loves', and 'acts' for God?

[29] Cf. P. I Iroegbu, *Metaphysics: The Kpim of Philosophy* (Owerri: International University Press Ltd., 1995), p. 22

[30] Cf. J. S Morreall, *Analogy and Talking About God: A Critique of the Thomistic Approach* (USA: University Press of America, 1978), p. 1

In predicating such terms about God, are you not involving yourself in contradiction, since you have earlier agreed that the idea of God goes along with a being not in space and time, a being that is immutable or absolutely simple? Can you actually say anything about God that will not involve any contradiction?

4.1.1 The Language of God: the Predication by Analogy

In addressing the problem of the language of God, Aquinas realized that there is a Being which is necessary, perfect, absolute, unchangeable, uncaused, unlimited and the reality of all realities.

While there is also a Being which is contingent, limited, imperfect, caused, in the process of becoming and also depends throughout on the former. So, as a master in the art of distinction, Thomas tried to explain the sense in which use the term 'Being' for God, who is the necessary Being and for his creatures, which are the contingent beings.

He said that there are three kinds of predication:

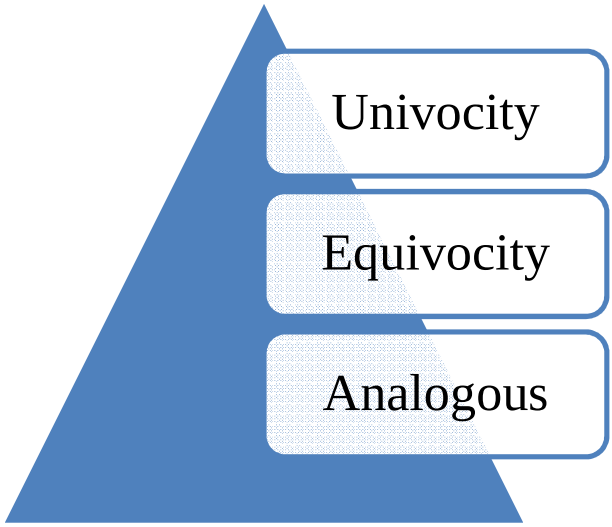

Figure 4.2: Thomas Aquinas Predication

Source: Distance Learning Centre, University of Ibadan

A term is 'univocal' when it is predicated of diverse things according to exactly the same concepts.[31]

A term is 'equivocal' when it is predicated of diverse things according to an entirely different concept.[32]

[31] Cf. H. J. Koren, *An Introduction to the Science of Metaphysics* (New York: B. Herder Books Co., 1955), p. 31

A term is 'analogous' if one and the same term or name is predicated of many according to concepts which are not entirely different, but agree in some common point.[33]

For Aquinas, the notion of being is not univocal because every being is unique and particular, neither is it an equivocal idea, since it is not obtained by any kind of abstraction. Rather, it is analogical, in as much as God and creatures, the most dissimilar realities, agree in the fact that they are Beings.

In his metaphysics of participation, Aquinas opined that the difference between Divine Being and other being lies in the fact that the capacity of the latter, which is the participant, is finite and so its perfection is inferior to that from which it participate. Their similarity lies in the fact that the former impresses his likeness in the latter, as much as possible for their nature.

As regards talking about God, Aquinas presented his theory of Analogy which says that you can not apply words with their ordinary meaning to God without ending up in a fallacy or absurdity; there is, however, a special extended sense for these words which make possible meaningful assertions about God.[34]

This implies that for Aquinas, when you say that 'God is good', the word 'good' as used here is not the same as when you say that 'Augustine is good', neither are they completely different, but they are analogous, that is, partly the same and partly different.

Likewise, if one says that 'God is wise' and 'Peter is wise', God is said to be wise not in the sense in which it applies to Peter, but in a sense somehow related to this sense. So, following the principle of analogy, you take terms such as God loves, sees, knows, to be used in a different but related sense when applied to creatures[35].

Box 4.1: Analogies of Thomas Aquinas
In his theory of analogy, he mentioned different types of analogy which include[36]: *1. Analogia proportionalitatis* (Analogy of Proportionality),

[32] Cf. H. J. Koren, *An Introduction to the Science of Metaphysics*, p. 32

[33] Cf. H. J. Koren, *An Introduction to the Science of Metaphysics*, p. 33

[34] Cf. J. S. Morreall, *Analogy and Talking About God: A Critique of the Thomistic Approach*, p. 9

[35] C.f. J. S. Morreall, *Analogy and Talking About God: A Critique of the Thomistic Approach*, p. 12

[36] Cf. Battista Mondi, *The Principle of Analogy in Protestant and Catholic Theology* (Netherlands: The Hague, 1963), p. 154

2. Analogia inequalitatis (Analogy of inequality),

3. Analogia attributionis intrinsecae (Analogy of intrinsic attribution),

4. Analogia attributionis extrinsecae (Analogy of extrinsic attribution),

5. Analogi entis (Analogy of faith),

6. Analogia relationis (Analogy of relation),

7. Analogia operationis (Analogy of operation)

4.1.2 Aquinas against Equivocal Predication

Aquinas' predication by analogy was an attempt to refute the positions of other medieval scholars who had argued for the predication by equivocation in talking about God. For medieval philosophers, like John Scotus Eriugenna, words are predicated of God in a way totally different from the way they are predicated of man, that is, in an equivocal manner.

Such that you say that God loves mankind, or that God is good, merciful, wise, just, forgiving, and so forth, you do not apply these qualities to God in a way similar when applied to creatures. So, God's love is not the same as human love. For Eriugenna, God\s love is 'super-love', while for Pseudo-Dionysius, it is super-essential love which transcends human love.

Figure 4.3: Johannes Scotus Eriugena (c. 815 – c. 877)

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Johannes_Scotus_Eriugena

The argument against the predication by equivocation in respect to speaking about God is that since you only know human love and you don't know what 'super-lover' or 'super-essential'

love means, it shows that such statement is a Pseudo-statement which tells us nothing since you do not know what God's love is.[37] So, equivocal predication is unapplicable for God's language.

- ■ Who saw God\s love as super-love
- ☐ Eriugenna

4.1.3 Aquinas against Univocal Predication

According to Duns Scotus, the notion of Analogy presupposes Univocity since one could not compare creatures with God unless one had a common concept of both. This shows that you are able to know God only by applying concepts drawn from us; and unless those concepts were common to us and God, then you would not be able to compare ourselves with a perfect God.[38]

Replying to this, Aquinas opined that if words are predicated of God and human beings in a univocal manner, then God will be anthropomorphic, since all our predicates are obtained through experience and are primarily used of limited or finite things.

However, for our transcendent God to possess such qualities as self-existence and omnipotence, He must be a significantly different kind of thing from anything within the scope of our experience.[39] Therefore, Univocal predication is not suitable for God's language.

[37] Cf. J. Omoregbe, *A Philosophical Look At Religion* (Lagos: Joja Educational Research and Publishers Ltd., 2000), pp.186-187

[38] Cf. Battista Mondi, *The Principle of Analogy in Protestant and Catholic Theology*, p. 5

[39] Cf. James F. Ross, *op.cit.*, p.132ff.

Figure 4.4: Duns Scotus (c. 1266 – 8 November 1308)
Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Duns_Scotus

4.1.4 Aquinas on Predication by Analogy

Aquinas opined that only analogical predication is for God's language. However, a problem arises due to various types of analogy in St. Thomas works. Your concern is to know the type of analogy being invoked in theological discourses. You can clearly identify three modes of analogy, via:

1. **Analogy of Attribution:** in which the nature signified by the concept is intrinsically realized in the primary analogates and in the others intrinsically and virtually.[40]
2. **Analogy of Proper Proportionality:** in which the nature signified by the concept is formerly and intrinsically realized in each of analogates according to a proportional similarity.[41]
3. **Analogy of Improper Proportionality/Metaphorical Analogy:** in which the nature signified by the term is realized formally and intrinsically in one of analogates, and in the others intrinsically and virtually.[42]

Among these three modes of analogy, only that of attribution seems suitable for theological discourses. For it preserve the transcendence of God, as well as the intelligibility of theological language.[43]

- ■ What did Aquinas believe is for God's language
- ☐ Aquinas believed only analogical predication is for God's language

4.2 Essence and Existence

[40] Cf. H. J. Koren, *Introduction to the Science of Metaphysics*, p. 34

[41] Cf. H. J. Koren, *Introduction to the Science of Metaphysics*, pp. 37-38

[42] Cf. J. S. Morreal, *Analogy and Talking About God: A Critique of the Thomistic Approach*, p. 11

[43] Cf. James F. Ross, "Metaphysical Themes in Thomas Aquinas", *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, vol. 25, No. 4 (1987), p. 610

In the course of his investigation, St. Thomas realized that none of the being he was studying is pure, for their perfection is never all the perfection of 'Being', which he understood to have a complete, total and infinite perfection.

He looked around and saw that the perfection of those beings is a restricted, limited and fallen perfection. Then, he asked 'What is it in beings that limit the perfection of being which they possess?' After a deep thought, he realized that what limits the act of being of finite being is the essence.

Box 4.2: Definition of Essence
Essence is defined as that in which every being (apart from the act of being itself, *actus essendi* that is God) has its being received and through which the being is restricted. As a matter of fact, essences of things are always limited capacities and are recipients which cannot contain the immense ocean of being.

When viewed in a strict sense, essence is substance considered as being of a certain kind of species and being capable of receiving act of existence.

Haven discovered the principle of limitation in finite being, Aquinas opined that finite being must be made up of two parts or elements, in which essence is one, and the act of existence is the other.

How did Thomas arrive at this distinction? It is indeed known to us that there is a difference between 'What is' and 'It is'. 'To be' means just to exist, but exist as what? Is it to exist as a cat today and then as a bird tomorrow? Since, you know that whatever exist exists as one thing or the other, then 'What is' (that is, essence) makes whatever exist as this and that.

- ■ According to Aquinas, what makes human being imperfect?
- ☐ Essence

4.2.1 The Metaphysical Conception of Being

In *De Veritate*, question 1, article 1, Aquinas declared the Absolute Primacy of Being. He said that 'being' is what the intellect conceive first, as something most known and into which it resolves all conception'. St. Thomas defined Being as the ultimate root and supreme cause of all things; that which has an act of existence. It is the reality of all realities, the actuality of all acts, the formality of all forms, the perfection of perfections.

As regards finite beings, the presence of two logically distinct elements in finite being indicates that there must be an extrinsic cause that is responsible for their bounding to form a whole, and this agent must also have produced these two elements.

This cause, according to St. Thomas, is the Supreme Being, in whom there is no distinction between essence and existence, and whose essence is subsistent being itself. Thus, he is the sole and purest being; all other beings have their origin from him. He is the plexus of all perfection and He produces other beings by means of creation, a means through which he communicates his goodness and through which other beings participates in his perfection.

Box 4.3: Transcendental Properties of Being

St. Thomas declared that the fundamental properties of being are *unum*, *verum*, and *bonum*, which means that Being is One, True, and Good. In *Summa Theologiae* Ia, q.11, art.1, he said that 'every Being is one and one does not add anything to being; it is only a negation of division; for one means undivided being. Thus, one is the same as Being'.

In another part of Summa, 1a, q.5, a.6, he said that 'Every being, by the very fact that it is, it is true that it is what it is; Goodness and Being are really the same'.

Hierarchy of Being

In order to bring in his postulation on the existence of angels, St. Thomas re-examine the order of being that has already been stated before him. The hierarchy goes thus:

a. The Absolute Being
b. The Angels
c. The Rational-Corporeal Beings
d. The Organic Beings
e. The Inanimate or Inorganic Beings

4.3 Matter and Form

A very crude definition of matter would be that it is the 'stuff' out of which a thing is made; whereas form is signified by the organisation that the matter takes. A common example used by Aquinas and his contemporaries for explaining matter and form was that of a statue.

Consider a marble statue. The marble is the matter of the statue whereas the shape signifies the form of the statue. The marble is the 'stuff' out of which the statue is made whereas the shape signifies the form that the artist decided to give to the statue.

Figure 4.5: Marble Statue

Source: http://www.landmarksinnewyork.com/photos-and-videos/nyc-metropolitan-museum-of-art-marble-statue-of-hermes/

On a more metaphysical level, form is the principle whereby the matter has the particular structure that it has, and matter is simply that which stands to be structured in a certain way.

It follows from this initial account that matter is a principle of potency in a thing; since if the matter is that which stands to be structured in a certain way, matter can be potentially an indefinite number of forms. Form on the other hand is not potentially one thing or another; form as form is the kind of thing that it is and no other.

On Aquinas's account, there are certain levels of matter/form composition.

On one level you can think of the matter of a statue as being the marble whereas you can think of the shape of the statue as signifying the form.

But on a different level you can think of the marble as signifying the form and something more fundamental being the matter. For instance, before the marble was formed into the statue by the sculptor, it was a block of marble, already with a certain form that made it 'marble'. At this level, the marble cannot be the matter of the thing, since its being marble and not, say, granite, is its form.

Thus, there is a more fundamental level of materiality that admits of being formed in such a way that the end product is marble or granite, and at a higher level, this formed matter stands as matter for the artist when is constructing the statue.

If you think of matter as without any form, you come to the notion of prime matter, and this is a type of matter that is totally unformed, pure materiality itself. Prime matter is the ultimate subject of form, and indefinable in itself; you can only understand prime matter through thinking of matter as wholly devoid of form.

As wholly devoid of form prime matter is neither a substance nor any of the other categories of being; prime matter, as pure potency, cannot in fact express any concrete mode of being, since as pure potency is does not exist except as potency. Thus, prime matter is not a thing actually existing, since it has no principle of act rendering it actually existing.

Matter can be considered in two senses as shown in the figure below

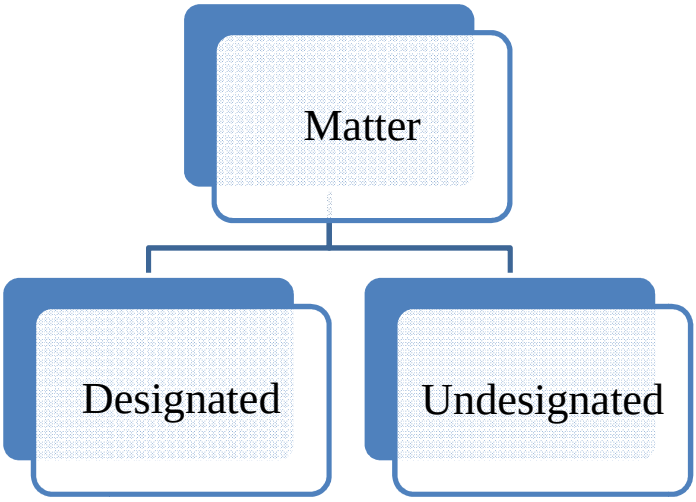

Figure 4.6: Types of matter

Source: Distance Learning Centre, University of Ibadan

Designated matter is the type of matter to which one can point and of which one can make use. It is the matter that you see around us. Designated matter is what individuates some form. As noted, the form of a thing is the principle of its material organisation. A thing's form then can apply to many different things insofar as those things are all organised in the same way.

Undesignated matter is a type of matter that you simply consider through the use of our reason; it is the abstracted notion of matter. For instance, the actual flesh and bones that make up an individual man are instances of designated matter, whereas the notions of 'flesh' and 'bones' are abstracted notions of certain types of matter and these are taken to enter into the definition of 'man' as such.

The form then can be said to be universal, since it remains the same but is predicated over different things. As signifying the actual matter that is organised in the thing, designated matter

individuates the form to ‘this’ or ‘that’ particular thing, thereby ensuring individuals (Socrates, Plato, Aristotle) of the same form (man).

Box 4.4: Kinds of Forms

Given that form is the principle of organisation of a thing's matter, or the thing's intelligible nature, form can be of two kinds. On the one hand, form can be substantial, organising the matter into the kind of thing that the substance is. On the other hand, form can be accidental, organising some part of an already constituted substance.

You can come to a greater understanding of substantial and accidental form if you consider their relation to matter. Substantial form always informs prime matter and in doing so it brings a new substance into existence; accidental form simply informs an already existing substance (an already existing composite of substantial form and prime matter), and in doing so it simply modifies some substance.

Given that substantial form always informs prime matter, there can be only one substantial form of a thing; for if substantial form informs prime matter, any other form that may accrue to a thing is posterior to it and simply informs an already constituted substance, which is the role of accidental form. Thus, there can only be one substantial form of a thing.

As stated above, essence is signified by the definition of a thing; essence is the definable nature of the thing that exists. A thing's essence then is its definition. It follows that on Thomas's account the essence of a thing is the composition of its matter and form, where matter here is taken as undesignated matter.

Contrary to contemporary theories of essence, Aquinas does not, strictly speaking, take essence to be what is essential to the thing in question, where the latter is determined by a thing's possessing some property or set of properties in all possible worlds. In the latter context, the essence of a thing comprises its essential properties, properties that are true of it in all possible worlds; but this is surely not Aquinas's view.

For Aquinas, the essence of a thing is not the conglomeration of those properties that it would possess in all possible worlds, but the composition of matter and form. On a possible-worlds view of essence, the essence of a thing could not signify the matter/form composite as it is in this actual world, since such a composite could be different in some possible world and therefore not uniform across all possible worlds.

Thus, Aquinas does not adopt a possible-worlds view of essence; he envisages the essence of a thing as the definition or quiddity of the thing existing in this world, not as it would exist in all possible worlds.

- While Substantial forms always ---------- accidental form informs----------
- Substantial form always informs prime matter, accidental form informs an already existing substance

4.4 Substance and Accident

Within Aquinas's metaphysical framework, substances can be both material (cats, dogs, humans) and immaterial (angels), but as noted earlier, the paradigm instances of substances are material substances, and the latter are composites of matter and form; a material substance is neither its matter alone nor its form alone, since matter and form are always said to be of some individual and never in themselves.

It follows then that material substances have parts, and the immediate question arises as to whether or not the parts of substances are themselves substances.

In order to address this issue, you must ask two questions:

i. While they are parts of a substance, are such parts themselves substances?
ii. Are the parts of a substance themselves things that can exist without the substance of which they are parts?

Concerning (i) you may say that while they are parts of a substance such parts cannot be substances; this is so given the definition of substance outlined above: that whose nature it is to exist not in some subject. Given that the parts of a substance are in fact parts *of* a substance, it is their nature to exist in some subject of which they are a part. Consequently, the parts of a substance cannot themselves be substances.

Concerning (ii) the case is somewhat different, now you must consider whether or not the parts of a substance can exist without the substance of which they are parts, that is, after the dissolution of the substance of which they are parts do the parts become substances in themselves? The parts of a substance receive their identity through being the parts *of* the substance whose parts they are.

Thus, the flesh and bone of a human being are flesh and bone precisely because they are parts of a human being. When the human being dies, the flesh and bone are no longer flesh and bone (except equivocally speaking) because they are no longer parts of a human substance; rather, the

flesh and bone cease to function as flesh and bone and begin to decompose, in which case they are not themselves substances.

However, on Aquinas's view, the elements out of which a substance is made can indeed subsist beyond the dissolution of the substance. Thus, while the elements are parts of the substance, they are not, as parts of a substance, substances in themselves, but when the substance dissolves, the elements will remain as independent substances in their own right.

Thus, in the case of the dissolution of the human being, while the flesh and bone no longer remain but decompose, the elements that played a role in the formation of the substance remain.

In more contemporary terms you could say that before they go to make up the bodily substances you see in the world, atoms are substances in themselves, but when united in a certain form they go to make cats, dogs, humans, and cease to be independent substances in themselves.

When the cat or dog or human perishes, its flesh and bones perish with it, but its atoms regain their substantial nature and they remain as substances in themselves. So, a substance can have its parts, and for as long as those parts are parts of a substance, those parts are not substances in themselves, but when the substance decomposes, those parts can be considered as substances in themselves so long as they are capable of subsisting in themselves.

In all, for Aquinas, substances are what are primarily said to exist, and so substances are what have existence but yet are not identical with existence. Aquinas's ontology then is comprised primarily of substances, and all change is either a change of one substance into another substance, or a modification of an already existing substance.

Given that essence is that which is said to possess existence, but is not identical to existence, substances are essence/existence composites; their existence is not guaranteed by what they are. They simply have existence as limited by their essence.

- ■ Can the parts of a substance be referred to as a substance?
- ☐ The parts of a substance cannot themselves be substances.

Summary of Study Session 4

In Study Session 4, you have learnt that:

1. The metaphysics of Thomas Aquinas was based along the lines of his position regarding the proper language of speaking about God, which is the predication by analogy, the conception of

being, as well as the transcendental properties of being, matter-form composite, where it shown that matter represented potency actualize by form, and the substance-accident distinction.

2. For Aquinas, substances are primarily what exist, and that all change is either change of one substance into another or a modification of an already existing substance.

Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs) for Study Session 4

Now that you have completed this study session, you can assess how well you have achieved its Learning outcomes by answering the following questions. Write your answers in your study Diary and discuss them with your Tutor at the next! Support meeting. You can check your answers with the Notes on the Self-Assessment questions at the end of this Module.

SAQ 4.1

Explain the 3 types of predication

SAQ 4.2

Write out the Hierarchy of Being

SAQ 4.3

Briefly explain the two senses of Matter

SAQ 4.4

When the human being dies, what happen to the bone and flesh?

Notes on Study Session 4

SAQ 4.1

1. Univocity: A term is ‘univocal’ when it is predicated of diverse things according to exactly the same concepts.
2. Equivocity: A term is ‘equivocal’ when it is predicated of diverse things according to an entirely different concept.
3. Analogous: A term is ‘analogous’ if one and the same term or name is predicated of many according to concepts which are not entirely different, but agree in some common point.

SAQ 4.2

The hierarchy goes thus:

a. The Absolute Being
b. The Angels

c. The Rational-Corporeal Beings
d. The Organic Beings
e. The Inanimate or Inorganic Beings

SAQ 4.3

Designated matter is the type of matter to which one can point and of which one can make use. It is the matter that you see around us. Designated matter is what individuates some form. As noted, the form of a thing is the principle of its material organisation.

Undesignated matter is a type of matter that you simply consider through the use of our reason; it is the abstracted notion of matter. For instance, the actual flesh and bones that make up an individual man are instances of designated matter, whereas the notions of 'flesh' and 'bones' are abstracted notions of certain types of matter and these are taken to enter into the definition of 'man' as such.

SAQ 4.4

When the human being dies, the flesh and bone are no longer flesh and bone because they are no longer parts of a human substance; rather, the flesh and bone cease to function as flesh and bone and begin to decompose, in which case they are not themselves substances.

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Study Session 5: The Metaphysics of Rene Descartes

Introduction

In this session, attempt shall be directed at examining the metaphysics of Rene Descartes. Of course, Descartes is easily one of the major thinkers in epistemology in the modern period. It is indeed easy to regard him as the father of modern philosophy.

However, he had things to say about some metaphysical notions such as the mind, the world and God, all which he derived from the existence of the self. In this regard, he places the self in the ontological spectrum of relations before God who is discovered because the self exists. And finally, he presents a systematic idealism combined with logic, mathematics and rationalism to produce a robust philosophy for the modern time.

In this study session, you will learn the metaphysics that underlies the philosophy of Descartes and also his explanation on the dualistic conception of the human person.

Learning Outcomes for Study Session 5

When you have studied this session, you should be able to:

5.1 Discuss the metaphysics that underlies the philosophy of Descartes.

5.2 Explain Descartes Dualistic Conception of the Human Person

5.1 The Metaphysics of Rene Descartes

Descartes metaphysics can at best be squeezed out of his epistemological stone. This is so because throughout his *Meditations* he focused on his epistemological project of foundationalism, certainty and deductive reasoning. However, he had a considerable discourse concerning the nature of the mind, God, and the world. All these are easily linked to his conception of substance.

Figure 5.1: René Descartes **(**31 March 1596 – 11 February 1650)

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ren%C3%A9_Descartes

For Descartes, the mind is a substance whose ontological status is that of an unextended, invisible, indestructible type. Yet, for Descartes this rather mysterious substance influences or impact upon the human body carrying it. To this extent, the mind which is perhaps best regarded as an immaterial matter or a non-substantial substance easily introduces into the Cartesian metaphysics an intractable difficulty.

For how can a substance be regarded as truly a substance when it has no place for extension or individuation? The *Meditations*, which Descartes is said to have begun around 1639, consist of the presentation of Descartes' metaphysical system in its most detailed level and in the expanding of Descartes' philosophical system, which he first introduced in the fourth part of his *Discourse on Method* (1637).

Box 5.1: Descartes *Meditations*

The *Meditations* is made up of six *meditations*, in which Descartes first discards all belief in a thing which are not absolutely certain, and then tries to establish what can be known for sure. The meditations were written as if he (Descartes) were meditating for 6 days: each meditation refers to the last one as "yesterday".[44] Descartes' metaphysical thought is also found in the *Principles of Philosophy* (1644), which the author intended to be a philosophy guidebook.

Descartes is often regarded as the first thinker to emphasize the use of reason to develop the natural science.[45] For him, philosophy was a thinking system that embodied all knowledge; that is, all philosophy is like a tree, of which Metaphysics is the root, physics the trunk, and all the other sciences the branches that grow out of this trunk, which are reduced to three principal areas, namely, medicine, mechanics, and ethics.

For Descartes, the science of morals represents the highest and most perfect pursuit, which, presupposing an entire knowledge of the other sciences is the last degree of wisdom.[46] In his *Discourse on Method*, he attempts to arrive at a fundamental set of principles that one can know as true without any doubt.

To achieve this, he employs a method called hyperbolical/metaphysical doubt – also sometimes referred to as methodological scepticism. He rejects any ideas that can be doubted, and then re-establishes them in order to acquire a firm foundation for genuine knowledge.[47]

Initially, Descartes arrives at only a single principle: which is that thought exists. Thought cannot be separated from me, therefore, I exist (*Discourse on the Method* and *Principles of Philosophy*). Most famously, this is known as *cogito ergo sum* – "I think, therefore I am".

Therefore, Descartes concluded, if he doubted, then something or someone must be doing the doubting; as such, the very fact that he doubted proved his existence. "The simple meaning of the phrase is that if one is sceptical of existence, that in and of itself proof that he does exist."[48]

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[44] Cf. John Marenbon, *Medieval Philosophy: A Historical And Philosophical Introduction* (London: Routledge, 2007), p. 174

[45] Cf. Tom Sorelli, *Descartes: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 19

[46] Cf. Desmond Clarke, *Descartes: A Biography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 58-59

[47] Cf. Richard A. Watson, "Rene Descartes", *Encyclopædia Britannica* http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/158787/Rene-Descartes. Retrieved 31 March 2012

[48] Cf. A. C. Grayling, *Descartes: The Life and Times of a Genius* (New York: Walker Publishing Co., Inc, 2005), p. 46

Descartes concludes that he can be certain that he exists because he thinks. But in what form does this take place? He perceives his body through the use of the senses. So Descartes determines that the only indubitable knowledge is that he is a *thinking thing*. Thinking is what he does, and his power must come from his essence.

Descartes defines "thought" (*cogitato*) as "what happens in me such that I am immediately conscious of it, insofar as I am conscious of it". Thinking is thus every activity of a person of which he is immediately conscious.[49] By this rendition, Descartes presents the human person as the 'I' or the ego that lives because the ego thinks.

In this respect, Descartes derives the cogito's reality from its functionality. Descartes goes further to derive the external world and the Supreme Being (God) from the fundamentals of the cogito.

To this effect, the reality of the self or the existence of the self is not derived from the existence of God, rather the reality of God and the world around us, as well as the bodies that you carry around are approved of their existence in the light of the ego.

This is a rather theologically or metaphysically unique representation of reality. Descartes, therefore, is only able to attempt a systematic discourse of the mind/body interaction from certain given assumption of the ontological status of the mind.

To further demonstrate the limitations of the senses, Descartes proceeds with what is known as the *Wax Argument*. In the development of the argument where he considers a piece of wax, his senses inform him that it has certain characteristics, such as shape, texture, size, colour, smell, and so forth.

When he brings the wax towards a flame, these characteristics change completely. However, it seems that it is still the same thing: it is still the same piece of wax, even though the data of the senses inform him that all of its characteristics are different. Therefore, in order to properly grasp the nature of the wax, he should put aside the senses.

[49] Cf. John Cottingham, *The Cambridge Companion to Descartes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 76

Figure 5.2: Wax and Flame for the Wax Argument

Source: http://hethoughtthereforeheis.blogspot.com/2012/07/descartes-on-method-in-his-book.html

He must use his mind. And so, Descartes concludes that something that he must grasped solely by the faculty of judgment which is the mind that which he thought he was seeing. In this manner, Descartes proceeds to construct a system of knowledge, discarding perception as unreliable and instead admitting only deduction as a method.

In the third and fifth *Meditation*, he offers an ontological proof of a benevolent God. On the basis that God is benevolent, Descartes says he can have some faith in the account of reality his senses provide him, for God has provided him with a working mind and sensory system and does not desire to deceive him.

From this supposition, however, he finally establishes the possibility of acquiring knowledge about the world based on deduction and perception. In terms of epistemology, therefore, Descartes can be said to have contributed such ideas as a rigorous conception of foundationalism and the possibility that reason is the only reliable method of attaining knowledge.

He, nevertheless, was very much aware that experimentation was necessary in order to verify and validate theories.[50] Descartes also wrote a response to scepticism about the existence of the external world. He argues that sensory perceptions come to him involuntarily, and are not willed by him.

They are external to his senses, and according to Descartes, this is evidence of the existence of something outside of his mind, and thus, an external world. Descartes goes on to show that things in the external world have a material nature by arguing that God would not deceive him as

[50] Cf. Richard A. Watson, "Rene Descartes", *Encyclopædia Britannica* http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/158787/Rene-Descartes. Retrieved 31 March 2012

to the ideas that are being transmitted, and that God has given him the "propensity" to believe that such ideas are caused by material things.

- ■ Why did Descartes call himself a thinking thing?
- ☐ He believed he exist because he thinks

5.2 Dualistic Conception of the Human Person

Descartes in his *Passions of the Soul* and *The Destruction of the Human Body* suggested that the body works like a machine; that it has material properties. The mind (or soul), on the other hand, was described as nonmaterial and does not follow the laws of nature. Descartes argued that the mind interacts with the body at the pineal gland.

This form of dualism or duality proposes that the mind controls the body, and that the body can also influence the otherwise rational mind, such as when people act out of passion. Most of the previous accounts of the relationship between mind and body had been unidirectional.

Descartes suggested that the pineal gland is "the seat of the soul" for several reasons.

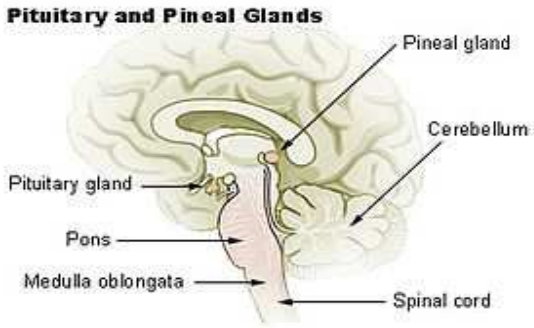

Figure 5.3: The Pineal gland in the brain

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pineal_gland

First, the soul is unitary, and unlike many areas of the brain the pineal gland appeared to be unitary (though subsequent microscopic inspection has revealed it is formed of two hemispheres).

Second, Descartes observed that the pineal gland was located near the ventricles. He believed the cerebrospinal fluid of the ventricles acted through the nerves to control the body, and that the pineal gland influenced this process.

Cartesian dualism set the agenda for philosophical discussion of the mind-body problem for many years after Descartes's death.[51]

- ■ According to Descartes, does the mind follow the laws of nature?
- ☐ No, because it is nonmaterial

Summary of Study Session 5

In Study Session 5, you have learnt that:

1. Although Rene Descartes was most prominent in epistemology, his philosophical inquiry still left behind a considerable chance for discussing the connection between epistemology and metaphysics.

2. Certain issues characterized Cartesian metaphysics, such as the notions of God, the mind, the self and the world. The ontological bases for all these notions are examined and are to be articulated if you to gain a considerable understanding of his epistemology.

Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs) for Study Session 5

Now that you have completed this study session, you can assess how well you have achieved its Learning outcomes by answering the following questions. Write your answers in your study Diary and discuss them with your Tutor at the next! Support meeting. You can check your answers with the Notes on the Self-Assessment questions at the end of this Module.

SAQ 5.1

What was Descartes ontological proof of a benevolent God?

SAQ 5.2

Give 2 reasons why Descartes suggested the pineal gland as "the seat of the soul"

Notes on Study Session 5

SAQ 5.1

On the basis that God is benevolent, Descartes says he can have some faith in the account of reality his senses provide him, for God has provided him with a working mind and sensory system and does not desire to deceive him. From this supposition, he establishes the possibility of acquiring knowledge about the world based on deduction and perception.

[51] Cf. Gert-Jan Lokhorst, "Descartes and the Pineal Gland", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Summer 2011 Edition)*, Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2011/entries/pineal-gland/>.

SAQ 5.2

1. First, the soul is unitary, and unlike many areas of the brain the pineal gland appeared to be unitary.

2. Second, Descartes observed that the pineal gland was located near the ventricles. He believed the cerebrospinal fluid of the ventricles acted through the nerves to control the body, and that the pineal gland influenced this process.

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Study Session 6: Metaphysics of Baruch de Spinoza

Introduction

According to Bertrand Russell, the metaphysical system of Spinoza is of the type inaugurated by Parmenides. There is only one substance, 'God or Nature'; nothing finite is self-subsistent. Put differently, Spinoza's metaphysics is a monism expressed in pantheism.

This is so because for Spinoza reality is one; and form and matter are aspects of the same reality, although he did not elucidate on the meaning of aspect. Furthermore, he speculates that God is in everything and everything is in God, using nature and God interchangeably. He therefore presents a metaphysics that is a rough mixture of idealism and materialism.

In this study session, you will learn about the central argument of Spinoza's metaphysics. You will also learn concerning the distinctively pantheist character of his idealist monism. You will be expected to draw a parallel between Spinoza's monism and some other metaphysical dualisms.

Learning Outcomes for Study Session 6

When you have studied this session, you should be able to:

6.1 Discuss the metaphysics of Baruch de Spinoza

6.2 Explain Substance Monism

6.1 Metaphysics of Baruch de Spinoza

Baruch (or, in Latin, Benedict) de Spinoza (1632-1677) was one of the most important rationalist philosophers in the early modern period, along with Rene Descartes, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, and Nicholas Malebranche.

Spinoza was also the most influential "atheist" in Europe during this period. "Atheist" at the time meant someone who rejects the traditional Biblical views concerning God and his relation to nature. In his most important book, titled *Ethics Demonstrated in a Geometrical Manner*, Spinoza argues for a radically new picture of the universe to rival the traditional Judeo-Christian one.

Figure 6.1: Baruch Spinoza (24 November 1632 – 21 February 1677)

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baruch_Spinoza

Using a geometrical method similar to Euclid's *Elements* and later Newton's *Principia*, he argues that there is no transcendent and personal God, no immortal soul, no free will, and that the universe exists without any ultimate purpose or goal.

Instead, Spinoza argues the whole of the natural world, including human beings, follows one and the same set of natural laws (so, humans are not special), that everything that happens could not have happened differently, that the universe is one inherently active totality (which can be conceived of as either "God" or "Nature"), and that the mind and the body are one and the same thing conceived in two ways.[52]

[52] Cf. Samuel Newlands, "Spinoza's Modal Metaphysics", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Spring 2010 Edition)*, Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2010/entries/spinoza-modal/>.

According to Spinoza, everything that exists is either a substance or a mode. A *substance* is something that needs nothing else in order to exist or be conceived. Substances are independent entities both conceptually and ontologically. A *mode* or property is something that needs a substance in order to exist, and cannot exist without a substance.

For example, being furry, orange, hungry, angry, and so on, are modes that need a substance which is furry, orange, hungry, angry, and so on. Hunger and patches of orange colour cannot exist floating around on their own; rather, hunger and patches of orange colour need something (namely, a substance) to *be* hungry and *have* the orange colour. Hunger and colours are, therefore, dependent entities or modes.[53]

For most of Spinoza's predecessors (including Aristotle and Descartes) there are lots of substances in the universe, each with their own modes or properties. For example, according to Descartes a cat is a substance which has the modes or properties of being furry, orange, soft, and so on.

- ■ Who was an atheist in Spinach time
- ☐ Someone who rejected the traditional Biblical views concerning God and his relation to nature

Spinoza, however, rejects this traditional view and argues instead that there is only one substance, called "God" or "Nature." Cats, dogs, people, rocks, and so on, are *not* substances in Spinoza's view, but rather, cats, dogs, people, rocks, and so on, are just modes or properties of one substance. This one substance is simply people-like in places, rock-like in other places, chair-like in still other places.

[53] Cf. Jason Waller, "Spinoza's Metaphysics", *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, http://www.iep.utm.edu/spinoz-m/. Retrieved on 28th Feb., 2013

Figure 6.2: Spinoza saw them all as just modes or properties of one substance

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rock_geology+Cat+Dog

One can think of substance as an infinite space. Some regions of this one space are hard and brown (rocks), other regions of space are green, juicy, and soft (plants), while still other regions are furry, orange, and soft (cats). As a cat walks across the room all that happens in Spinoza's view is that different regions of space become successively furry, orange, and soft.[54]

This one substance has an infinite number of *attributes*. An attribute is simply an essence; a "what it is to be" that kind of thing. According to Descartes, every substance has only one attribute: bodies have only the attribute of extension, and minds have only the attribute of thought. Spinoza, however, argues against this claim that the one substance is absolutely infinite and so it must exist in every way that something can exist.

Thus, he infers that the one substance must have an infinite number of attributes. An attribute, according to Spinoza, is just the essence of substance under some way of conceiving or describing the substance. When you consider substance one way, then you conceive of its essence as extension.

When you consider substance another way, then you conceive of its essence as thought.[55] While substance has an infinite number of different attributes, Spinoza argues that human beings only know about two of them: extension and thought.

- ■ How many attributes does a substance has?
- ☐ One

[54] Cf. Jonathan Bennett, *A Study of Spinoza's Ethics* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1984), pp. 88-89

[55] Cf. Michael Della Rocca, *Representation and the Mind-Body Problem in Spinoza* (New York: Oxford, 1996), pp. 164-165

6.2 Substance Monism

The most distinctive aspect of Spinoza's system is his substance monism; that is, his claim that one infinite substance – God or Nature – is the only substance that exists. His argument for this monism is his first argument in Part I of the *Ethics*.

The basic structure of the argument is that since every substance has at least one attribute, and that two substances cannot share the same nature or attribute, for God alone has all possible attributes. Therefore, no other substance other than God can exist. That is, there is only one substance (called "God" or "Nature") which has all possible attributes.

No other substance can exist because if it existed it would have to share an attribute with God, but it is impossible for two different substances to both have the same attribute. Spinoza defends each of his assumptions by noting that if a substance existed which did not have any attributes, then (by Spinoza's definition of *attribute*) the substance would not have an essence.

However, according to Spinoza, it makes no sense to claim that something exists which does not have an essence. Thus, every substance has at least one attribute. This premise is not particularly controversial. Spinoza's argument for the position that "two substances cannot share the same nature or attribute" is considered to be much more controversial.

Box 6.1: Example of Substance
Here Spinoza argues that if two substances share one and the same attribute, then there is no way to tell the two substances apart. If substance A and substance B both have the same attribute as their nature, then in virtue of which are there two different substances in such a case? Why are they not just one substance? Since no cause can be given to explain their distinctness, Spinoza infers that they must actually be the same.

As regards a substance with infinite attributes, Spinoza explicitly provides a number of different proofs for its existence. One proof is a version of the Ontological Argument also used by Anselm and Descartes.

Spinoza's argument is interesting, however, because he provides a very different reason for claiming that the essence of each substance includes existence. Spinoza's Ontological Argument, once unpacked, in noting that he begins by stating the when two things have nothing in common, one cannot be the cause of the other.

Since it is impossible for two substances to have the same attribute (or essence) and that two substances with different attributes have nothing in common; it can be inferred that one substance cannot cause another substance to exist. Either substances are caused to exist by other substances, or they exist by their own nature.

Thus, substances must exist by their own nature (that is, the essence of a substance must involve existence). This argument differs from the Ontological Arguments offered by Anselm and Descartes in that

i. Spinoza does *not* infer the existence of God from the claim that our idea of God involves existence and
ii. Spinoza does not assume that existence is a perfection (and so a property).

Spinoza's argument, therefore, can avoid some of the more common objections to the Ontological proofs as formulated by Descartes and Anselm.[56] Spinoza's Argument for Substance Monism is generally deemed a failure by contemporary philosophers.

The most common way that has been employed to reject Spinoza's argument for substance monism is to reject his assertion that "two substances cannot share the same nature or attribute." One of the most popular arguments against this promise was first presented by Leibniz.

[56] Cf. William Earle, "The Ontological Argument in Spinoza", in *Spinoza: A Collection of Critical Essays*, *e*dited by Marjorie Grene (Garden City: Anchor Press, 1973a), pp. 214-216.

Figure 6.3: Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibniz (July 1, 1646 – November 14, 1716)

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gottfried_Wilhelm_Leibniz

Leibniz argued that whereby it might be impossible for two substances to have *all* of their attributes in common, because then they would be indistinguishable, it may be possible for two substances to share an attribute and yet differ by each having another attribute that is not shared. For example, one substance may have attributes A and B and another substance has attributes A and C. The two substances would be distinguishable because each has an attribute the other lacks, but both substances would nevertheless share an attribute.

Though this argument of Leibniz appears persuasive, it is not recorded that Spinoza responded to this objection, probable because he (Spinoza) did not find it persuasive enough.[57]

You can conclude this lecture by presenting the query that Spinoza did not give a conceptual analysis of what he meant by aspects; and he also did not make the necessary distinction between nature and God as the one substance, especially in referring to the them interchangeably.

Summary of Study Session 6

In Study Session 6, you have learnt that:

1. The metaphysical temperament of Spinoza's philosophy. The lecture examined the pantheistic monism of Spinoza, identifying his conception of substance and the world as aspects or attributes of this substance. This substance he referred to nature or God of which every other thing is an extension.

[57] Cf. Michael Della Rocca, "Spinoza's Substance Monism" in *Spinoza: Metaphysical Themes,* edited by Olli Koistinen and John Biro (New York: Oxford, 2002), pp. 17-22

2. The lecture however concludes with the critique of a major aspect of Spinoza's metaphysics. This has to do with not providing adequate explication for the idea of aspect or extensionality.

Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs) for Study Session 6

Now that you have completed this study session, you can assess how well you have achieved its Learning outcomes by answering the following questions. Write your answers in your study Diary and discuss them with your Tutor at the next! Support meeting. You can check your answers with the Notes on the Self-Assessment questions at the end of this Module.

SAQ 6.1

Attempt a representation of Spinoza's idea of substance.

SAQ 6.2

What was Leibniz response on Spinoza argument for Substance monism?

Notes on Study Session 6

SAQ 6.1

A substance is something that needs nothing else in order to exist or be conceived. Substances are independent entities both conceptually and ontologically. Spinoza rejected the traditional view and argues that there is only one substance, called "God" or "Nature." This one substance is simply people-like in places, rock-like in other places, chair-like in still other places.

SAQ 6.2

Leibniz argued that whereby it might be impossible for two substances to have *all* of their attributes in common, because then they would be indistinguishable, it may be possible for two substances to share an attribute and yet differ by each having another attribute that is not shared.

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Study Session 7: Metaphysics of Baron von Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz

Introduction

Leibniz's philosophical task is the rationalist' project, which can best be understood in the light of his career as a diplomat. The diplomat must reconcile divergent points of view and merge them into a harmonious unified compact. Similarly, in his philosophy Leibniz attempts to use the principles of mathematics and theology to work out his vision of a universal, cosmic harmony.

In doing so, he hopes to reconcile science and religion, mechanism and teleology, modern and ancient philosophy. He does not think this has yet been accomplished, for the complaints that "our human knowledge of nature seems to me at present like a shock well provided with all kinds of wares without any order or inventory."[58]

In this study session, you will be expected to acquire and articulate the analysis of Leibniz's contribution to unity and harmony in reality. You will be introduced into the pluralist principle of Leibniz's monadology.

Learning Outcomes for Study Session 7

When you have studied this session, you should be able to:

7.1 Discuss the analysis of Leibniz's contribution to unity and harmony in reality.

7.2 Explain the pluralist principle of Leibniz's monadology

[58] Cf. William Lawhead, *Voyage of Discovery*, p. 282

7.1 The Metaphysics of Leibniz

Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, (1646–1716), a German, was not just a philosopher and mathematician, but an outstanding metaphysician. The fundamental claims of his metaphysics can be traced to his rejection of Spinoza's metaphysical speculations, especially Spinoza's identification of God with nature, and argues instead that God must be an agent, that is, that God must have a free will.

Figure 7.1: Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibniz

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gottfried_Wilhelm_Leibniz

He also denies that individual persons are mere modes or aspects of Spinoza's one substance – what he calls "God or Nature." Third, he disagrees with Spinoza's claim that the individual does not survive death and, last, he finds that Spinoza is wrong to argue that happiness consists of an acquiescence of the inevitable.[59]

Leibniz's question, concerning "Why is there anything at all?" seems to be the biggest metaphysical question ever asked in the history of philosophy. This question is not only difficult to answer but poses difficulties in its very conception.

After all, it is – or should be – clear that such questions as "Why is there anything at all?" and "why are things in general as they actually are?" and "why are the laws of nature as they are?" cannot be answered within the standard causal framework.[60]

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[59] Cf. Christopher Martin, "The Courtier and the Heretic: Leibniz, Spinoza, and the Fate of God in the Modern World", in *Shofar*: *An Interdisciplinary Journal of Jewish Studies*, (2007) Vol.25. Issue: 2, p.134

[60] Cf. Nicholas Rescher, "Optimalism and Axiological Metaphysics," in *The Review of Metaphysics*, vol. 53. No. 4, (June 2000), p. 807

Leibniz's metaphysics, however, is built round the philosophy of monadology wherein everything in the world is a windowless monad. This includes humans. And in our relations and interactions, though apparently direct and one-on-one, is actually indirect, interacting with one another through the monad monadum or supreme monad. In this vein, Leibniz gives a number of arguments for the argument of supreme monad or God.

In Leibniz's view, the universe (i.e. all-of-reality) consists of an indefinite number of 'monads,' or soul-like substances dominated by one supreme monad, God.[61] He agrees with Descartes that I, myself and other spirits, or souls, exist. But he wonders how the spiritual the only sort of reality or do ultimately non-spiritual realities also exist?

The problem from which Leibniz starts reduces itself therefore to this: are figure and motion ultimately real? This question he answers in the negative. Every extension is, in the first place, he points out, infinitely divisible.

There is no surface so small that it is not abstractly possible to break it up, in conception, into smaller surfaces. But endlessness, Leibniz holds, is an irrational conception, therefore that which is by nature endlessly divisible cannot be an ultimate reality. "It is impossible," he says," to find the principles of a true unity in matter alone . . . since matter is only a collection or mass of parts to infinity."

For, as he elsewhere says, "a continuum is not only divisible to infinity, but every particle of matter is actually divided into other parts different among themselves. . . . And since this could always be continued, you should never reach anything of which you could say here is a real being."

In other words, since by 'ultimate' is meant a further irreducible reality that which is endlessly divisible cannot be ultimate.[62] It is even more obvious that motion is not an ultimate, a self-dependent, and sort of reality.

"Motion", Leibniz says, if you regard only its exact and formal meaning, that is, change of place, is not something entirely real, and when several bodies change their places reciprocally, it is not possible to determine by considering the bodies alone to which among them movement or repose

[61] Cf. Mary W. Calkins, *The Persistent Problems of Philosophy: An Introduction to Metaphysics through the Study of Modern Systems,* 5th ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1925), p.74

[62] Cf. Mary W. Calkins, *The Persistent Problems of Philosophy: An Introduction to Metaphysics through the Study of Modern Systems,* 5th ed., p. 76

is to be attributed. Evidently, that which is always relative to something else is not ultimately real.

Leibniz believed in a perfectly good Supreme Being who created and maintained the world and whose existence could be proven. He argues for God a posteriori based on the harmonized diversity of the world and the fact that there are contingent beings whose "final or sufficient reason" must be in a "necessary being".

Like many of his contemporaries, Leibniz owed a number of his assumptions about God as creator of the world to an ancient (mostly Platonist) tradition.[63] For Leibniz, there is an ultimately good, perfectly self-sufficient, and thoroughly unified Supreme Being on which everything else depends and which itself depends on nothing.

God's mind contains a number of Ideas or attributes which the perfect essences are of and which are used as models for created things. The Idea or attribute of God is emanated to a creature in such a way that neither God nor God's attribute is depleted in any way while the creature acquires the attribute, though in an inferior manner.

The emanative process is continual so that a creature instantiates a divine attribute if and only if God emanates the attribute to the creature. For Leibniz, it is evident that created substances depend upon God, who preserves them and who even produces them continually by a kind of emanation.[64]

Leibniz's universe contains only God and non-composite, immaterial, soul-like entities called "monads". He argues that things seem to cause one another because God ordained a pre-established harmony among everything in the universe.

- ■ On what did Leibniz agrees with Descartes
- ☐ He agrees with Descartes that I, myself and other spirits, or souls, exist

7.2 Pluralist Principle of Leibniz's Monadology

[63] Cf. Mary W. Calkins, *The Persistent Problems of Philosophy: An Introduction to Metaphysics through the Study of Modern Systems*, 5th ed., p. 256

[64] Cf. Mary W. Calkins, *The Persistent Problems of Philosophy: An Introduction to Metaphysics through the Study of Modern Systems*, 5th ed., p. 257

According to Leibniz, the natural world is that it is composed of substances, each of which has its own source of activity by means of which it is constituted as a self-sufficient, unified thing. Leibniz famously began to use the word “monad” as his name for substance. “Monad” means that which is one, has no parts and is therefore indivisible.

These are the fundamental existing things, according to Leibniz. His theory of monads is meant to be a superior alternative to the theory of atoms that was becoming popular in natural philosophy at the time. Leibniz has many reasons for distinguishing monads from atoms. The easiest to understand is perhaps that while atoms are meant to be the smallest unit of extension out of which all larger extended things are built, monads are non-extended.

Box 7.1: Complete concept

A substance (that is, monad) is that reality which the complete concept represents. A complete concept contains within itself all the predicates of the subject of which it is the concept, and these predicates are related by sufficient reasons into a vast single network of explanation.

So, relatedly, the monad must not only exhibit properties, but contain within itself "virtually" or "potentially" all the properties it will exhibit in the future, as well as contain the "trace" of all the properties it did exhibit in the past. Leibniz later opined that the monad is "pregnant" with the future and "laden" with the past.

All these properties are "folded up" within the monad; they unfold when they have sufficient reason to do so. Furthermore, the network of explanation is indivisible; to divide it would either leave some predicates without a sufficient reason or merely separate two substances that never belonged together in the first place. Correspondingly, the monad is one, simple and indivisible.

If, however, Leibniz's metaphysically necessary being is not a logically necessary being, but (speaking metaphorically) the supreme brute fact, then his principle boils down to the simple claim that there is a terminus to explanation, that everything which has a full explanation has an ultimate, or at least a complete explanation.

Whether it is rational to suppose that phenomena have complete explanations is a matter of whether you have potential explanations for them of great simplicity and explanatory power. Leibniz claims that the universe is not metaphysically necessary, and so that its existence needs explanation.

He may be right, but I cannot see how you can argue for this claim except in terms of the relatively greater simplicity and explanatory power of a potential *explanans*. Leibniz does not provide such an argument. It is up to us to see the force of an argument along these lines for the existence of God.[65]

- ■ What is a monad?
- ☐ Monad means that which is one, has no parts and is therefore indivisible.

Summary of Study Session 7

In Study Session 7, you have learnt that:

[65] Cf. Richard Swinburne, *The Existence of God* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), p. 128

1. There is a nature of reality in the metaphysics of Leibniz. To be sure, Leibniz is of the rationalist school of thought who postulated the thesis known as monadology wherein there is supreme monad through whom all other existences that are windowless monad relate.

2. In the metaphysics of Leibniz with the monistic tradition, although he spoke of the existence of all other things in the world, including humans as windowless monads, relating with one another via the monad monadum, or the supreme monad.

Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs) for Study Session 7

Now that you have completed this study session, you can assess how well you have achieved its Learning outcomes by answering the following questions. Write your answers in your study Diary and discuss them with your Tutor at the next! Support meeting. You can check your answers with the Notes on the Self-Assessment questions at the end of this Module.

SAQ 7.1

What are Leibniz responses to Spinoza speculations?

SAQ 7.2

Briefly explain what the monad represents.

Notes on Study Session 7

SAQ 7.1

1. He rejected Spinoza's identification of God with nature, and argues instead that God must be an agent, that is, that God must have a free will.

2. He denies that individual persons are mere modes or aspects of Spinoza's one substance – what he calls "God or Nature."

3. He disagrees with Spinoza's claim that the individual does not survive death.

4. He finds that Spinoza is wrong to argue that happiness consists of an acquiescence of the inevitable.

SAQ 7.2

Monad means that which is one, has no parts and is therefore indivisible. Leibniz opined that the monad is "pregnant" with the future and "laden" with the past.

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Study Session 8: The Metaphysics of John Locke: The Reality behind the Appearance

Introduction

Like other empiricists of the modern period, John Locke did not draw a clear distinction between his empiricism and his metaphysic. However, it is possible to draw some conclusions concerning the nature of reality from the representation of his epistemological project. Locke believed that his task in philosophy was to clear the underbush of debris and rubbish that are found on the way to genuine knowledge.

This underbush is innate ideas. To this extent, Locke had a clear perception concerning the nature of reality. Reality for him consists in ideas derivable from the sense only. The external world therefore exists, but as ideas, sensations, or sense data. It is from this thesis that his basic metaphysical stance which is where he opposed the possibility of innate ideas can be drawn. His arguments are represented in what follows in the present lecture.

In this study session, you will be learning about the metaphysical theory of idealism side-by-side the empirical theory empiricism of John Locke. Furthermore, you will be learning about innate, simple and complex ideas.

Learning Outcomes for Study Session 8

When you have studied this session, you should be able to:

8.1 Discuss the metaphysical theory of idealism side-by-side the empirical theory empiricism of John Locke

8.2 Explain the Innate Ideas

8.3 Briefly Explain the Complex Ideas

8.1 The Metaphysical Theory of Idealism

John Locke did not espouse any distinct metaphysics. He presented everything in and out of his theory of knowledge. However, in addition to discussing how you know, he is interested in the reality of what you know.

He has given you a theory of how you arrived at all the ideas that you have. And so when you experience the idea of, for instance, redness, roundness, crunchiness, and sweetness altogether, you apply to this collection of experiences, the label 'apple'. But something here needs to be explained.

Figure 8.1: John Locke (29 August 1632 – 28 October 1704)

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Locke

Why do these sorts of experiences always occur to us in the clusters? If they are distinct sensations, why are they never separate and free floating? You do not perceive sweetness standing alone by itself. You always experience a sweet *something*, whether it is an apple, a lump of sugar, or a candy bar. Locke says you need the idea of substance.

Box 8.1: Definition of Substance

Substance literally means "that which stands under". The substance of the apple then is a *reality* in which the qualities that produce our experiences of redness, roundness, and crunchiness inhere. The problem is that you cannot have knowledge of 'this reality' itself, for you have direct experience only of the ideas it support. The issue of the nature of substance has been a matter of controversy since the first publication of the *Essay*.

The primary/secondary quality distinction provides you with certain ways in understanding physical objects, but Locke is puzzled about what underlies or supports the primary qualities themselves. He is also puzzled about what material and immaterial substances might have in common that would lead us to apply the same word to both.

These kinds of reflections led him to the relative and obscure idea of substance in general. You experience properties appearing in regular clumps, but you must infer that there is something that supports or perhaps 'holds together' those qualities. It is quite clear that Locke sees no alternative to the claim that there are substances supporting qualities.

He does not, for example, have a theory of tropes (tropes are properties that can exist independently of substances) which he might use to dispense with the notion of substance.[66] In fact, he may be rejecting something like a theory of tropes when he rejects the Aristotelian doctrine of real qualities and insists on the need for substances.

He is thus not at all a sceptic about 'substance' in the way that Hume is. But, it is also quite clear that he is regularly insistent about the limitations of our ideas of substances.

Since Berkeley, Locke's doctrine of the substratum or substance in general has been attacked as incoherent. It seems to imply that you have a particular without any properties, and this seems like a notion that is inconsistent with empiricism. You have no experience of such an entity and so no way to derive such an idea from experience. Locke himself acknowledges this point.[67]

In order to avoid this problem, Michael Ayers has proposed that you must understand the notions of 'substratum' and 'substance in general' in terms of Locke's doctrine of real essences developed in Book III of the Essay rather than as a separate problem from that of knowing real essences.

[66] Cf. Richard Aaron, *John Locke* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1937), p. 57
[67] Cf. Vere Chappell, *The Cambridge Companion to Locke* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 87

Figure 8.2: Michael Ayers

Source: http://www.ae-info.org/ae/User/Ayers_Michael

The real essence of a material thing is its atomic constitution. This atomic constitution is the causal basis of all the observable properties of the thing. Were the real essence known, all the observable properties could be deduced from it. Locke claims that the real essences of material things are quite unknown to us.

Locke's concept of substance in general is also a 'something I know not what.' Thus, on Ayers' interpretation 'substance in general' means something like 'whatever it is that supports qualities' while the real essence means 'this particular atomic constitution that explains this set of observable qualities'.

Thus, Ayers wants to treat the unknown substratum as picking out the same thing as the real essence – thus eliminating the need for particulars without properties. This proposed way of interpreting Locke has been criticized by scholars both because of a lack of textural support, and on the stronger grounds that it conflicts with some things that Locke does say.[68]

As you have reached one of the important concepts in Book III, let us turn to that Book and Locke's discussion of language.

Furthermore, it is argued that Locke is too committed to common sense to deny that something out there underlies our ideas. However, the notion of substance is clearly a problem for his position and undermines the rigour of his empiricism. As it can be said, since you do not experience substances what are they like? And how can you be sure they are there?

[68] Cf. Nicholas Jolley, *Locke, His Philosophical Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 71-73

In response, Locke suggests that if someone were asked these questions, he could only say that substance was something, he knows not what and that it was the supposed, but unknown support of those qualities you find existing.[69]

Locke seems to use our limited knowledge of material substances in a subtle and unusual way to support his religious outlook. Typically, the religious sceptic says you can be certain matter exists, but you have no evidence for any spiritual realities. Actually, Locke says, our idea of spiritual substance is just as clear and well founded as our idea of physical substance.

After all, you never encounter material substance themselves, only the qualities that inhere within them. In the same way, through reflection, Locke says he encounters his mental activities, which he must suppose inhere within some spiritual substances just as he suppose there is material substance underlying what he perceived.

Thus "you have as many and as clear ideas belonging to spirit as you have belonging to body, the substance of each being equally unknown to us." Thus, for Locke, just as it is reasonable to assume there is matter, so it is reasonable to assume there are spiritual substances.

Broadly examined, Locke's metaphysics was similar to Descartes'. Since Locke believes in both physical and spiritual substances, as well as holding to an interactionist theory of the mind-body relationship.

- ■ What does essence mean to Ayers?
- ☐ Essence to Ayers means 'this particular atomic constitution that explains this set of observable qualities'

8.2 Innate Ideas

As with Francis Bacon and Rene Descartes before him, Locke's mission can be viewed as a kind of urban renewal project. His first project was to clear away the debris of unintelligible terms and useless systems of thought. Only then could he make a fresh start on more modern construction.

His modest goal as a philosopher was to "be employed as an under labourer in clearing the ground and removing some of the rubbish that lie in the way of knowledge". The rubbish he most wanted to sweep away was the doctrine of innate ideas.

[69] Cf. Gideon Yaffe, "Locke on Ideas of Substance and the Veil of Perception," *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly*, vol. 85, No. 3, (2004), p. 259

This doctrine claimed that some kinds of ideas, principle or knowledge are nor acquired through experience, but are built into the mind itself. This doctrine was a standard thesis, in the rationalist position from Plato to Leibniz, but Locke raised a number of fundament objections to it.

For Locke, 'ideas' are not considered as objects of knowledge so much as its building blocks. He says that an idea is anything that is "the immediate object of perception, thought or understanding". He presents a random collection of examples to illustrate what he means by ideas.

These include things such as whiteness, hardness, sweetness, thinking, motion, man, elephant, army, drunkenness and others." Notice that by idea, Locke does not mean only concepts or abstract notions, such as "justice" or "infirmity".[70] Ideas can also be the very specific and concrete qualities found in sensation, such as colours, taste and sounds.

[70] Cf. John Yolton, *John Locke and the Way of Ideas* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1956), p. 78

Box 8.2: Examples of Innate Ideas

Typical examples of innate ideas are logical principle such as "whatever it is" or "it is impossible for the same to be and not to be" or the whole is greater than the part". Furthermore, both within philosophical traditions and among many of Locke's contemporaries the claim was made that moral principles as well as the concept of God were innate.

It is necessary to point out at this point that a favourite argument for innate ideas is based on the claim that there is universal agreement concerning certain principles. First of all, Locke argues that if even these were true, it would not prove that the ideas were innate.[71]

There could be some other reasons why people come to have some ideas in common, for example, all cultures have ideas corresponding to fire, Sun heat, and numbers; but these ideas are universal because human experience are uniform and not because they are innate.

Second, Locke points that not all people know the preceding logic principle stated above. Many children, mentally diffident people, and people in pre-scientific cultured do not exhibit knowledge of these truths. But if these principles really were "natural imprint" on the mind, everyone will know that you have these ideas.

- How did Locke saw an idea?
- Locke saw an idea as anything that is the immediate object of perception, thought or understanding

8.2.1 Simple Ideas

If there are no innate ideas or if knowledge does not originate in the mind, how then does it end up in the mind? The answer according to Locke is "through experience". He asked us to suppose that the mind is like a blank sheet of white paper on which experience makes it marks.

You come naked into this world both physically and mentally. Whatever ideas are found in the mind must have been deposited there by some experience. In another place, John Locke compares the mind to dark closet or like the interior of a camera (in modern terms). Though the opening of the lens, represented by the various senses, the external world is able to deposit images within the camera.

[71] Cf. John Yolton, *John Locke and the Way of Idea*, p. 81

Figure 8.3: The mind like the interior of a camera

Source: http://openclipart.lynms.edu.hk/clipart/johnny_automatic/

A very important consideration of John Locke's metaphysics is the concept of simple ideas. These come in two varieties. The first consist of all the ideas that come from sensation, such as the idea you have of qualities, such as yellow, white, heat, cold, soft, hard, bitter and sweet. The second categories of simple ideas are the ideas of reflection; gained from our experience of our own mental operations.[72]

8.3 Complex Ideas

Like the camera film that receives and records the light that enters through its lens so the human mind passively receive ideas through experience. However, these ideas are sounds, colour and other pings of sensation. Although the mind cannot originate ideas, Locke holds that it can process them into more complex ideas.

For instance, the idea of space can be combined with other perceptions of space to produce an immense space. In the same vein, the idea of sweetness, and that of roundness and that of yellow and so on, can be combined to produce the idea of apple.

Furthermore, you can engage the mind in the production of abstractions, that is, complex ideas of abstractions, such as philosophy, life, mathematics and so on. There are also ideas of relations formed as a result of the combination of other simple ideas such as father and son, husband and

[72] Cf. I. C. Tipton, *Locke on Human Understanding: Selected Essays* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1977), pp. 67-68

wife, teacher and student and so on. All these form the ontology in the Lockean representation of reality.

There are other realities such as primary and secondary ideas. What these mean is that it is very difficult to separate his epistemology from his metaphysics. As such, in the fourth book of *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Locke tells you what knowledge is and what humans can know and what they cannot (not simply what they do and do not happen to know).

Locke defines knowledge as "the perception of the connexion and agreement or disagreement and repugnancy of any of our Ideas" (IV. I. 1. p. 525). This definition of knowledge contrasts with the Cartesian definition of knowledge as any ideas that are clear and distinct.

Locke's account of knowledge allows him to say that you can know substances in spite of the fact that our ideas of them always include the obscure and relative idea of substance in general. Still, Locke's definition of knowledge raises in this domain a problem analogous to those you have seen with perception and language.

If knowledge is the "perception of … the agreement or disagreement … of any of your Ideas" — are you not trapped in the circle of your own ideas? What about knowing the real existence of things?

Locke is plainly aware of this problem, and very likely holds that the implausibility of sceptical hypotheses, such as Descartes' Dream hypothesis, along with the causal connections between qualities and ideas in his own system is enough to solve the problem.

It is also worth noting that there are significant differences between Locke's brand of empiricism and that of Berkeley that would make it easier for Locke to solve the veil of perception problem than Berkeley. Locke, for example, makes transdictive inferences about atoms where Berkeley is unwilling to allow that such inferences are legitimate.

This implies that Locke has a semantics that allows him to talk about the unexperienced causes of experience (such as atoms) where Berkeley cannot.[73] What then can you know and with what degree of certainty? You can know that God exists with the second highest degree of assurance, that of demonstration. You also know that you exist with the highest degree of certainty.

The truths of morality and mathematics you can know with certainty as well, because these are modal ideas whose adequacy is guaranteed by the fact that you make such ideas as ideal models

[73] Cf. J. L. Mackie, *Problems from Locke* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), pp. 55-56

which other things must fit, rather than trying to copy some external archetype which you can only grasp inadequately.

On the other hand, your efforts to grasp the nature of external objects are limited largely to the connection between their apparent qualities. The real essence of elephants and gold is hidden from us: though in general you suppose them to be some distinct combination of atoms which cause the grouping of apparent qualities which leads you to see elephants and violets, gold and silver as distinct kinds.

Your knowledge of material things is probabilistic and thus opinion rather than knowledge. Thus our "knowledge" of external objects is inferior to our knowledge of mathematics and morality, of ourselves, and of God. While Locke holds that you only have knowledge of a limited number of things, he thinks you can judge the truth or falsity of many propositions in addition to those you can legitimately claim to know.[74]

- ■ Did Locke's brand of empiricism agrees with that of Berkeley
- ☐ No, they saw things differently

Summary of Study Session 8

In Study Session 8, you have learnt that:

1. The metaphysics of John Locke centres on the rejection of innate ideas. As he argued, the doctrine of innate ideas is not sustainable because nothing in reality, is not first given to us through the sense and the mind. For Locke, the mind is likened to the dark inner part of the camera and the sense constitutes the lens through which ideas come into in the form of light. To this extent, logical truths, mathematical equivalences and analytic judgements are handmaids of the senses.

2. The idea of substance in Locke's metaphysics – which is the reality that holds together various ideas and yet unperceived by the sense. This however creates a problematic for Locke.

Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs) for Study Session 8

[74] Cf. Uzgalis, William, "John Locke", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Fall 2012 Edition)*, Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2012/entries/locke/>.

Now that you have completed this study session, you can assess how well you have achieved its Learning outcomes by answering the following questions. Write your answers in your study Diary and discuss them with your Tutor at the next! Support meeting. You can check your answers with the Notes on the Self-Assessment questions at the end of this Module.

SAQ 8.1

What do you consider the problem in Locke's representation of substance?

SAQ 8.2

How would you evaluate Locke's objection of innate ideas?

SAQ 8.3

Discuss how Locke's saw and defined knowledge?

Notes on Study Session 8

SAQ 8.1

Locke saw no alternative to the claim that there are substances supporting qualities. He does not have a theory of tropes which he might use to dispense with the notion of substance.

SAQ 8.2

Locke believed ideas are universal because human experience are uniform and not because they are innate. He also points that not all people know the preceding logic principle stated above. Many children, mentally diffident people, and people in pre-scientific cultured do not exhibit knowledge of these truths.

SAQ 8.3

Locke defines knowledge as "the perception of the connexion and agreement or disagreement and repugnancy of any of our Ideas". His definition of knowledge contrasts with the Cartesian definition of knowledge as any ideas that are clear and distinct.

Locke's account of knowledge allows him to say that you can know substances in spite of the fact that our ideas of them always include the obscure and relative idea of substance in general. Still, Locke's definition of knowledge raises in this domain a problem analogous to those you have seen with perception and language.

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Study Session 9: The Metaphysics of George Berkeley

Introduction

The project Berkeley set for himself is clear from the rather descriptive title of one of his major work published in 1710, *A Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge*, wherein the chief causes and difficulty in the sciences with the grounds of scepticism, atheism and irreligion, are inquired into.

In this work, he says that the causes of error in the sciences are the metaphysical assumes of Newton physics. The grounds of scepticism, he says, lies in Locke's epistemology. The errors he saw within these two systems of thought, then, are the prime targets of Berkeley's philosophy.

In this study session, you will learn about a variant of the idealist metaphysics of Berkeley. This is meant to build on the position of John Locke as an empiricist. You will also learn about Berkelian philosophy on abstraction, idealism and immaterialism

Learning Outcomes for Study Session 9

When you have studied this session, you should be able to:

9.1 Discuss the idealist metaphysics of Berkeley.

9.2 Explain Berkley's philosophy on abstraction

9.3 Briefly Explain Berkley's Philosophy on Idealism and Immaterialism

9.1 Berkeley's Metaphysics

Berkeley's metaphysics may be understood as an attempt to develop Locke's theory; that is, to exploit the notion that signification is the operative relation between idea and its external cause as well as between word and idea.

He postulates one kind of signification, the mentalistic kind, in both cases; as human minds designate terms to stand for things (or ideas), the author of nature designates ideas of sense (things in nature) to stand for ideas he wishes to communicate to other minds. Thus the notion of active willing is integrated with the notion of signification in Berkeley's metaphysics.

Figure 9.1: George Berkeley (12 March 1685 – 14 January 1753)

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_Berkeley

Signification is something a mind does; it wills that a sign stand for a thing or idea. Human minds do this when they stipulate definitions, and the author of nature does this when he communicates to other minds, using the language of nature, what you see, hear, and so on.

The arbitrary nature of human signification differs from the ordered signification of the author of nature as the imperfect, fallible, limited mind differs from the perfect, omnipotent, all-good, infinite mind of God.[75]

[75] Cf. Robert L. Armstrong, *Metaphysics and British Empiricism* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1970), p. 148

Berkeley is of the view that there is no such entity as a physical world, or matter, in the sense of an independently existing object. Instead, what you ordinarily call physical objects are actually collections of ideas in a mind.

For instance, a table is the set of perceptions that one has when one touches and looks at it. But this does not mean that things are really different from what they appear to be.

For Berkeley, all that you can ever know about objects is merely the ideas you have of them. The appearances you experience are the very objects, and the appearances are sensations or perceptions of a thinking being.

- ■ What is the relationship between Berkeley metaphysics and Locke theory?
- ☐ Berkeley metaphysics is meant to develop Locke theory

9.1.1 Mind and God

According to Berkeley, ideas themselves are only passive effects of something, unable to produce or cause any further ideas. You are able to influence or affect only a very small number, if any, of the ideas that you have.

Whether you will it or not, when you open your eyes, you perceive certain ideas. When your finger is pricked, even though you may not enjoy it, or wish it, you experience a painful sensation, and so on. Berkeley then posits that the order of ideas must be due to some mind other than yours, a mind that constantly perceives all the ideas and at various times makes you perceive the particular group of ideas that constitutes our experience.

For Berkeley, God is that universal mind that always perceives. Meanwhile, the mind is active, and is an agent, while ideas are only the passive effects of mental activity. The entire, magnificent world of nature, with its wonderful scientific harmony, is nothing but an expression of the ideas in the divine mind. The natural world was presented to you as a kind of sign language for interpreting God's mind.[76]

He was well aware that many scientists, including Newton, were people of great faith who saw the new science as pointing to the majesty of God. However, Berkeley saw sinister implications lurking in the science celebrated in his days.

[76] Cf. Richard H. Popkin, and Avrum Stroll, *Philosophy Made Simple*, p.131

Figure 9.2: Isaac Newton (25 December 1642 – 20 March 1727)

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Isaac_newton

- ■ Differentiate between the mind and ideas
- ☐ While the mind is an active, agent, ideas are the passive effects of mental activity.

9.2 Abstraction

In the Introduction to the *Principles of Human Knowledge*, Berkeley laments the doubt and uncertainty found in philosophical discussions, and he attempts to find those principles that drew philosophy away from common sense and intuition. He finds the source of scepticism in the theory of abstract ideas, which he criticizes.

Figure 9.3: An Abstract Idea

Source: http://pictify.com/259243/my-abstract-ideas-story-of-deserted-forest

Berkeley begins by giving a general overview of the doctrine: It is agreed on all hands, that the qualities or modes of things do never really exist each of them apart by itself, and separated from all others, but are mixed, as it were, and blended together, several in the same object.

But as you are told, the mind being able to consider each quality singly, or abstracted from those other qualities with which it is united, does by that means frame to itself abstract ideas. Not that it is possible for colour or motion to exist without extension: but only that the mind can frame to itself by abstraction the idea of colour exclusive of extension, and of motion exclusive of both colour and extension.[77]

Although theories of abstraction date back at least to Aristotle (*Metaphysics*, Book K, Chapter 3, 1061a29-1069b4), were prevalent among the medievals, and are found in the Cartesians (Descartes, 1:212-213; Arnauld and Nicole), there seem to be two reasons why Berkeley focused on Locke account as you find in his book, *Essay concerning Human Understanding*.

First, Locke's work was recent and familiar to Berkeley at the time; and second, Berkeley seems to have considered Locke's account the best available. According to Locke, the doctrine of abstract ideas explains how knowledge can be communicated and how it can be increased. It explains how general terms obtain meaning.[78]

A general term, such as 'cat' refers to an abstract general idea, which contains all and only those properties that one deems common to all cats, or, more properly, the ways in which all cats resemble each other. The connection between a general term and an abstract idea is arbitrary and conventional, and the relation between an abstract idea and the individual objects falling under it is a natural relation (resemblance).

If Locke's theory is sound, it provides a means by which one can account for the meaning of general terms without invoking general objects (universals).

Having outlined Locke's account of abstraction in Introduction, which allegedly results in the idea of a human which is coloured but has no determinate colour – that the idea includes a general idea of colour, but not a specific colour such as black or white or brown or yellow – which has a size but has no determinate size, and so forth, Berkeley argues in that he can form no such idea.

[77] Cf. George Berkeley, *Principles of Human Knowledge* Intro, §7

[78] Cf. John Locke, *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, 3.3.1-20, pp. 409-420

On the face of it, his argument is weak. At most it shows that insofar as he cannot form the idea, and assuming that all humans have similar psychological abilities, there is some evidence that no humans can form abstract ideas of the sort Locke described. But there is a remark made in passing that suggests there is a much stronger argument implicit in Berkeley's position.

Berkeley writes: To be plain, I own myself able to abstract in one sense, as when I consider some particular parts or qualities separated from others, with which though they are united in some object, yet, it is possible they may really exist without them.

But I deny that I can abstract one from another, or conceive separately, those qualities which it is impossible should exist so separated; or that I can frame a general notion by abstracting from particulars in the manner aforesaid. Which two last are the proper acceptations of abstraction.[79]

This three-fold distinction among types of abstraction is found in Arnauld and Nicole's *Logic or the Art of Thinking*.

The first type of abstraction concerns integral parts. The head, arms, torso, and legs are integral parts of a body: each can exist in separation from the body of which it is a part.[80]

The second kind of abstraction "arises when you consider a mode without paying attention to its substance, or two modes which are joined together in the same substance, taking each one separately".[81]

The third concerns distinctions of reason, for example, conceiving of a triangle as equilateral without conceiving of it as equiangular.[82]

Berkeley grants that he can abstract in the first sense – "I can consider the hand, the eye, the nose, each by itself abstracted or separated from the rest of the body"[83] – but he denies that he can abstract in the latter two senses. The latter two cases represent impossible states of affairs.

Berkeley further noted that the abstractionists held that it is impossible for a mode to exist apart from a substance. Many abstractionists also accepted a conceivability criterion of possibility: If

[79] Cf. George Berkeley, *Principles of Human Knowledge* Intro. §10

[80] Cf. A. Arnauld and P. Nicole, *Logic Or the Art of Thinking* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 37

[81] Cf. A. Arnauld and P. Nicole, *Logic Or the Art of Thinking*, p. 37

[82] Cf. A. Arnauld and P. Nicole, *Logic Or the Art of Thinking*, p. 38

[83] Cf. George Berkeley, *Principles of Human Knowledge* Intro. §10

one can (clearly and distinctly) conceive of a state of affairs, then it is possible for that state of affairs to exist as conceived.[84]

This principle entails that impossible states of affairs are inconceivable. So, granting it is impossible for a mode to exist apart from a substance, it follows that it is impossible to conceive of a mode apart from a substance, that the second form of abstraction is impossible. And if the second falls, the third falls as well, since the third requires that alternative descriptions of an object pick out no differences in reality.

So, a traditional theory of modes and substances, the conceivability criterion of possibility, and abstraction are an inconsistent triad. The inconsistency can be resolved by dropping the doctrine of abstract ideas. Berkeley made this point explicitly, thus: It is, I think, a received axiom that impossibility cannot be conceived.

For what created intelligence will pretend to conceive, that which God cannot cause to be? Now it is on all hands agreed, that nothing abstract or general can be made really to exist, whence it should seem to follow, that it cannot have so much as an ideal existence in the understanding.

One of the marks of the modern period is an adherence to the principle of parsimony (Ockham's razor). The principle holds that the theoretically simpler of two explanations is more probably true.

In the seventeenth and eighteen centuries, this was sometimes expressed as "God does nothing in vain". So, if it is possible to construct a theory of meaning that does not introduce abstract ideas as a distinct kind of idea, that theory would be simpler and deemed more probably true. This is the strategy Berkeley adopts.

Granting Locke that all existents are particulars, Berkeley remarks, "But it seems that a word becomes general by being made the sign, not of an abstract general idea, but of several particular ideas, any one of which it indifferently suggests to the mind".[85] Ideas remain particular, although a particular idea can function as a general idea.

For example, when a geometer draws a line on a blackboard, it is taken to represent all lines, even though the line itself is particular and has determinate qualities. Similarly, a particular idea can represent all similar ideas. So, whether one takes Berkeley to mean that words apply

[84] Cf. René Descartes, *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*. Transl. & ed. by John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoff, Dugald Steward. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 54

[85] Cf. George Berkeley, *Of the Principles of Human Knowledge* Intro. §11

immediately to objects or that meaning is mediated by paradigmatic ideas, the theory is simpler than the abstractionists' insofar as all ideas are particular and determinate.

Berkeley concludes his discussion of abstraction by noting that not all general words are used to denote objects or kinds of objects. His discussion of the non-denotative uses of language is often taken to anticipate Ludwig Wittgenstein's interest in meaning-as-use.

- ■ What is the connection between a general term and an abstract idea
- ☐ The connection between a general term and an abstract idea is arbitrary and conventional

9.3 Idealism and Immaterialism

The philosophy of Berkeley can in some sort be summed up by his now famous principle, which is "to be is to be perceived". To this end, Berkeley, as an idealist, held that ordinary objects are only collections of ideas, which are mind-dependent; and as an immaterialist, he (Berkeley) held that there are no material substances.

There are only finite mental substances and an infinite mental substance, namely, God. On these points there is general agreement. There is, however, less agreement on Berkeley's argumentative approach to idealism and immaterialism and on the role of some of his specific arguments. His central arguments are often deemed weak.

Contrary to some commentators, Berkeley's metaphysics can be said to rest on epistemological foundations.

Berkeley begins his discussion by pointing out that it is evident to anyone who takes a survey of the objects of human knowledge, that they are either ideas actually imprinted on the senses, or else such as are perceived by attending to the passions and operations of the mind, or lastly ideas formed by help of memory and imagination, either compounding, dividing, or barely representing those originally perceived in the aforesaid ways.

This seems to say that ideas are the immediate objects of knowledge in a fundamental sense (acquaintance). Following Locke, there are ideas of sense, reflection, and imagination. So, ordinary objects, as known, are collections of ideas marked by a single name. Berkeley's example is an apple.

If ideas are construed as objects of knowledge, then there must also be something that knows or perceives them, and exercises divers operations, as willing, imagining, and remembering about

them. This Berkeley calls the 'mind' or 'spirit'. Minds (as knower's) are distinct from ideas (as things known).

For an idea, to be is to be perceived (known). Since this holds for ideas in general, it holds for "sensations or ideas imprinted on the sense" in particular.[86] Berkeley contends that the "opinion strangely prevailing amongst men, that houses, mountains, rivers, and in a world all sensible objects have an existence natural or real, distinct from being perceived" is inconsistent, "a manifest contradiction".[87]

If one construes 'sensible objects' as ideas of sense, and ideas are objects of knowledge, then having a real existence distinct from being perceived would require that an object be known (as an idea) and unknown (as a thing distinct from being perceived), which is inconsistent. He explains the source of the error on the basis of the doctrine of abstract ideas.

For Berkeley, ordinary objects, as known, are nothing but collections of ideas. If, like Descartes, Berkeley holds that claims of existence are justified if and only if the existent can be known, then ordinary objects must be *at least* collections of ideas.

As Berkeley put it, "all the choir of heaven and furniture of the earth, in a word all those bodies which compose the mighty frame of the world, have not any subsistence without a mind, that their being is to be perceived or known".[88] The only substance that can be known is a spirit or thinking substance (PHK §7).

One of the marks of the modern period is the doctrine of primary and secondary qualities. Although it was anticipated by Descartes, Malebranche, and others, the terms themselves were introduced in Robert Boyle's "Of the Origins of Forms and Qualities" (1666) and Locke's *Essay*. Primary qualities are the properties of objects as such. The primary qualities are solidity, extension, figure, number, and mobility.[89]

Secondary qualities are either the those arrangements of corpuscles containing only primary qualities that cause one to have ideas of colour, sound, taste, heat, cold, and smell or, on some

[86] Cf. George Berkeley, *Of the Principles of Human Knowledge* §3

[87] Cf. George Berkeley, *Of the Principles of Human Knowledge* §4

[88] Cf. George Berkeley, *Of the Principles of Human Knowledge* §6

[89] Cf. John Locke, *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, 2.8.9, p. 135; cf. 2.8.10, p. 135

accounts, the ideas themselves.[90] If the distinction can be maintained, there would be grounds for claiming that ordinary objects are something more than ideas.

It is this theory of matter Berkeley considers first. After giving a sketch of Locke's account of the primary/secondary quality distinction, Berkeley's initial salvo focuses on his previous conclusions and the likeness principle. "By matter therefore you are to understand an inert, senseless substance, in which extension, figure, and motion, do actually subsist". Such a view is inconsistent with his earlier conclusions that extension, figure, and motion are ideas.

The likeness principle blocks any attempt to go beyond ideas on the basis of resemblance. Combining the previous conclusions with the standard account of primary qualities requires that primary qualities both exist apart from the mind and only in the mind. So, Berkeley concludes that "what is called *matter* or *corporeal substance*, involves a contradiction in it".[91]

He then turns to the individual qualities. If there is a distinction between primary and secondary qualities, there must be a ground for the distinction. Indeed, given the common contention that an efficient cause must be numerically distinct from its effect, if one cannot show that primary and secondary qualities are distinct, there are grounds for questioning the causal hypothesis.

Berkeley argues that there is no ground for the distinction. Appealing to what one knows – ideas as they are conceived – Berkeley argues that one cannot conceive of a primary quality such as extension without some secondary quality as well: one cannot "frame an idea of a body extended and moved, but I must withal give it some colour or other sensible quality which is acknowledged to exist only in the mind".[92]

If such sensible qualities as colour exist only in the mind, and extension and motion cannot be known without some sensible quality, there is no ground for claiming extension exists apart from the mind. The primary/secondary quality distinction collapses. The source of the philosophical error is cited as the doctrine of abstract ideas.

After disposing of the primary/secondary quality distinction, Berkeley turns to an older theory of material substance, a substratum theory. At least since Aristotle, philosophers had held that qualities of material objects depend on and exist in a substance which has those qualities. This supposed substance allegedly remains the same through change.

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[90] Cf. John Locke, *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, 2.8.8, p. 135; 2.8.10, p. 135

[91] Cf. George Berkeley, *Of the Principles of Human Knowledge* §9

[92] Cf. George Berkeley, *Of the Principles of Human Knowledge* §10

But if one claims that there are material substances, one must have reasons to support that claim. In *Principles of Human Understanding,* Berkeley develops a series of arguments to the effect that:

1. One cannot form an idea of a substratum,
2. The theory of material substance plays no explanatory role, and
3. It is impossible to produce evidence for the mere possibility of such an entity.

Berkeley argues that one cannot make good on the notion of 'support' – evident support cannot here be taken in its usual or literal sense, as when you say that pillars support a building – so one does not even have a relative idea of material substratum. Without a clear notion of the alleged relation, one cannot single out a material substance on the basis of a relation to something perceived.[93]

Berkeley seems to argue that in any case one might consider – books in the back of a closet, plants deep in a wood with no one about, footprints on the far side of the moon – objects of thought as being related to the mind conceiving of them. So, it is contradictory to claim that those objects have no relation to a mind.

However, Berkeley claims that an inspection of our ideas shows that they are causally inert.[94] Since there is a continual succession of ideas in our minds, there must be some cause of it. Since this cause can be neither an idea nor a material substance, it must be a spiritual substance.

This sets the stage for Berkeley's argument for the existence of God and the distinction between real things and imaginary things. One knows that one causes some of one's own ideas. Since the mind is passive in perception, there are ideas which one's own mind does not cause.

Only a mind or spirit can be a cause. "There is therefore some other will or spirit that produces them". As such, this is *not* an argument for the existence of God, although Berkeley's further discussion assumes that at least one mind is the divine mind.[95]

- ■ Was Berkeley only an idealist?
- ☐ No, he was also an Immaterialist

[93] Cf. George Berkeley, *Of the Principles of Human Knowledge* §17

[94] Cf. George Berkeley, *Of the Principles of Human Knowledge* §25

[95] Cf. George Berkeley, *Of the Principles of Human Knowledge* §§146-149

Summary of Study Session 9

In Study Session 9, you have learnt that:

1. The central issues in the metaphysics of George's Berkeley are that it identifies the metaphysical theory of idealism and immaterialism as the description of Berkeley position. The essence of this position is that reality is made up of ideas, and since ideas are of the mind, the most fundamentals of reality are the mind plus the ideas.

Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs) for Study Session 9

Now that you have completed this study session, you can assess how well you have achieved its Learning outcomes by answering the following questions. Write your answers in your study Diary and discuss them with your Tutor at the next! Support meeting. You can check your answers with the Notes on the Self-Assessment questions at the end of this Module.

SAQ 9.1

What role did religion play in Berkelian empiricism?

SAQ 9.2

How did Berkley see the Abstractionist?

SAQ 9.3

Differentiate the primary and secondary qualities

Notes on Study Session 9

SAQ 9.1

Berkeley was aware that many scientists of his time including Newton were people of great faith who saw the new science as pointing to the majesty of God. Berkeley saw sinister implications lurking in the science celebrated in his days.

SAQ 9.2

Berkeley further noted that the abstractionists held that it is impossible for a mode to exist apart from a substance. Many abstractionists also accepted a conceivability criterion of possibility: If one can conceive of a state of affairs, then it is possible for that state of affairs to exist as conceived

SAQ 9.3

Primary qualities are the properties of objects as such. The primary qualities are solidity, extension, figure, number, and mobility while Secondary qualities are either those arrangements

of corpuscles containing only primary qualities that cause one to have ideas of colour, sound, taste, heat, cold, and smell or, on some accounts, the ideas themselves.

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Study Session 10: The Problem of Consciousness

Introduction

The notion of consciousness is easily the main focus of the aspect of metaphysics referred to as philosophy of mind. And so, the question that is raised in this area of discourse is; what is consciousness? Put differently, what is it to be conscious? How do you distinguish the conscious from the un-conscious? And what sorts of things are capable of consciousness? Questions such as these shall be the focus of this study session.

Since the notion of consciousness is specifically related to the mind, the lecture therefore examines the meaning and nature of the mind; in other words, what is the mind? And what are the functions of the mind?

In discussing these issues the session shall examine two theories of consciousness to wit the first person and the third person theories of consciousness. You will also learn about the central question of consciousness and how it is different from the state of un-consciousness. In addition, you will learn the differences between behaviourism and introspectionism.

Learning Outcomes for Study Session 10

When you have studied this session, you should be able to:

10.1 Discuss the concept of Consciousness

10.2 Explain the theories of Consciousness

10.1 Concept of Consciousness

The term, 'consciousness' is also commonly used to refer to a state of wakefulness. Being awake or asleep or in some other state such as coma clearly influences what one can be conscious of, but it is not the same as being conscious in the sense of having 'phenomenal contents'.

When sleeping, for example, you can still have visual and auditory experiences in the form of dreams. Conversely, when awake there are many things at any given moment that one does *not* experience. So, in a variety of contexts it is necessary to distinguish 'consciousness' in the sense of 'phenomenal consciousness' from wakefulness and other states of arousal, such as dream sleep, deep sleep and coma.

The most fundamental and commonly used notion of "conscious" is captured by Thomas Nagel's famous "what it is like" sense.[96] Consciousness is 'what it is like to be something'. Without it, after all, it would not be like anything to exist When, for instance, I am in a conscious mental state, there is "something it is like" for me to be in that state from the subjective or first-person point of view.

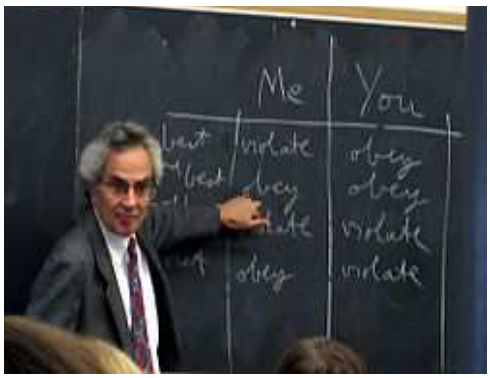

Figure 10.1: Thomas Nagel

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Nagel

When I am, for example, smelling a rose or having a conscious visual experience, there is something it "seems" or "feels" like from my perspective. An organism, such as a bat, is conscious if it is able to experience the outer world through its (echo-locatory) senses. There is also something it is like to be a conscious creature whereas there is nothing it is like to be, for example, a table or tree.

[96] See Thomas Nagel, "What is it like to be a Bat", *The Philosophical Review*, LXXXIII, 4 (October 1974): 435-50

In everyday life there are two contrasting situations which inform our understanding of the term consciousness. You have knowledge of what it is like to be conscious (when you are awake) as opposed to not being conscious (when in dreamless sleep). You also understand what it is like to be conscious *of* something (when awake or dreaming) as opposed to not being conscious of that thing.[97]

Figure 10.2: Are you still conscious while sleeping?

Source: http://valleysleepcenter.com/blog/crazy-things-we-do-in-our-sleep/

This everyday understanding provides a simple place to start. A person, or some other entity, is conscious if they experience *something'*, conversely, if a person or entity experiences nothing, they are not conscious. In common usage, the term, 'consciousness' is often synonymous with 'awareness' or 'conscious awareness'.

The 'contents of consciousness' encompass all that you are conscious of, are aware of, or experience. These include not only experiences that you commonly associate with yourself, such as thoughts, feelings, images, dreams, body sensations, and so on, but also the experienced three-dimensional world (the phenomenal world) beyond the body surface.

Our conscious lives are the sea in which you swim, so it is not surprising that consciousness is difficult to understand. You consciously experience many different things, and you can think about the things that you experience. But it is not so easy to experience or think about *consciousness itself.*

Traditionally, the puzzles surrounding consciousness have been known as the 'mind-body' problem. However, it is now clear that 'mind' is not quite the same thing as 'consciousness', and

[97] Cf. Max Velmans, *Understanding Consciousness* (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 6

that the aspect of body most closely involved with consciousness is the brain.[98] Consciousness is often held to be that thing which distinguishes man from a good deal of the world around him.

To some, it is possessed only by the living and not by the dead or the inorganic which never lived. There is also the view that even among the living, it is not found in plants or in the lower forms of animal life. The problem here however is that of where to draw the line dividing those animals which have consciousness from those which do not.

Some have therefore reasoned from this fact that you cannot draw a line between the non-conscious and the conscious to the conclusion that all animals either posses consciousness all together, or they do not all together possess consciousness.

Whichever of the above views you subscribe to, the question that looms large and which should form the starting point of every enquiry is:

- What is this 'thing' called consciousness?
- What is this 'thing' which man probably has, rock doesn't have and frogs and snakes perhaps have?
- If one tries to be conscious of a word on paper, what do you get?

All you observe is the word on the paper and nothing more.

According to G. E. Moore (using a blue patch as his object of consciousness), "The moment you try to fix our attention upon consciousness and to see what distinctly it is, it seems to vanish. It seems as if you had before us a mere emptiness. When you try to introspect the sensation of blue, all you can see is the blue: the other elements are as if it were diaphanous [transparent]".[99]

This is the result that most of us would get when you try this experiment. Yet, you know perfectly well you are conscious of the word on the page. What therefore is this consciousness?

G.T. Ladd characterised consciousness in this way:

> What you are when you are awake as contrasted with what you are when you sink into a profound and perfectly dreamless sleep … what you are less and less as you sink gradually into dreamless sleep … and what you are more and more as the noise of the crowd

[98] Cf. Max Velmans, *Understanding Consciousness*, p. 4

[99] G. E. Moore, "The Refutation of Idealism", in T. Baldwin (ed.) *G. E. Moore: Selected Writings* (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 41

> outside momentarily arouses us from our after dinner nap, or as you come out of the midnight darkness of the typhoid fever crisis.[100]

- ■ How does a bat remain conscious?
- ☐ A bat is conscious if it is able to experience the outer world through its echo-locatory senses

10.2 Theories of Consciousness

The word "mind", in recent discourse, is now much more frequently used to refer to third-person phenomena. Terms in common parlance such as "the subconscious mind" bear witness to this fact. It has completely been taken over by the Cognitive science, which is essentially the third-person investigation of mechanisms of thought, often described as the "study of mind."

To this extent, the word, "mind" is a general coverall for abstractions from the brain, understood either in the first-person or third-person; it is no longer a matter of subjective, personal experience. This same attitude is applicable to consciousnesses, though this seems to be less often the case.

Meanwhile, it is obvious that the mind is caused by a brain, as your thought is being supported by a pattern of neural activity in your brain. Basically, you have two major theories or accounts of consciousness.

These are the First-Person or the subjective account, which results from attending to how things are in one's own case and the Third-Person or the objective account, which results from attending to how things are when someone else is conscious in some way. Let us examine, first, the third-person account of consciousness.

10.2.1 The Third Person or Objective Account of Consciousness

When you ask a man who has been hit on the head whether he is conscious, what do you mean? What do you expect to find out if you are told he is conscious and what do you also expect if you are told he is unconscious? You expect that if he is conscious, he will respond to stimuli and not respond otherwise.

In other words, you expect certain kinds of behaviour under certain stimuli. From this view, consciousness is to be defined in terms of the kind of bodily behaviour elicited by certain sorts of

[100] G. T. Ladd, *Psychology, Descriptive and Explanatory* (London: C. Scribner's Sons, 1894), p. 125

stimuli. Such a definition of consciousness would fall under the heading of what is usually called behaviourism.

Box 10.1: Forms of Behaviourism

There are two forms of behaviourism. You have the methodological and metaphysical behaviourism.

1. Methodological behaviourism is a method of approach to problems in the field of psychology. It consists in confining psychological theories and the procedures for evaluating those theories to observable behaviour.

2. Metaphysical behaviourism on the other hand is the theory about the nature of consciousness and the analysis of expressions referring to consciousness.

It is metaphysical, not methodological behaviourism that concerns you here. Behaviourism proposes that you define all expressions involving consciousness in terms of bodily behaviour which can be observed in others as easily as in oneself.[101] Hence behaviourism is seen as a typical third person account.

But such a view (behaviourism) must be carefully formulated since it is obvious that a person who is conscious or who is in some particular conscious state may not be behaving in any noticeable way. He may just be flat on his back, eyes shut. Yet, he may still be conscious, having sensations and thoughts and so on. He may be in pain for example, without groaning or complaining.

A typically behaviouristic device for dealing with the fact that persons in a particular mental state may not be behaving in any particular way, is to introduce the concept of a disposition to behave. Dispositions are properties of things such that under certain circumstance, the thing that has the dispositional property will undergo a certain change.

Brittleness, for example, is a dispositional property. A thing is brittle if and only if under suitable circumstance, it will shatter. An object may have the dispositional property of brittleness and still never shatter.

[101] Cf. Gilbert Ryle, *The Concept of Mind* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1949), p. 56

Figure 10.3: A brittle fracture in glass

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brittleness

If you defined thoughts, feelings, and wishes and so on, in terms not of behaviour, but of disposition to behave, then the man who hides his feelings behind a poker face would still have dispositions to behave in certain ways. So, to attribute consciousness or some particular state of consciousness is to attribute a disposition to behave in particular ways.

The third person account does indeed do considerable justice to a great many of the concepts applicable exclusively to conscious beings. If you say of a person that he is ingenious, resourceful, ambitious or considerate, you are referring predominantly to what he says and do. The crucial test for the application of these terms and indeed their basic content lie in behaviour and behavioural dispositions.

However, there are cases that offer difficulty to the third person account, most especially those cases in which their essence lie in what happens inwardly. The most plausible candidates here are sensations (feeling), mental images and thoughts. Let us concentrate on having sensations of pains for example.

When a heavy object falls on someone's feet, he turns pale, cries out and limps about. That means he is obviously feeling pain. But, what does it mean to feel pain? On the third person account, it is just to behave in these ways under these circumstances or at least to be disposed to so behave.

However, such an analysis leaves out just the essential feature, the sharp highly unpleasant sensation so forcibly there is the forefront of consciousness. Surely, it is the inner sensation which is the immediate cause of the outward behaviour of grimacing and limping about. But this inner cause is left out in the third person account.

The argument here is that particular behaviour or disposition to behave is neither 'necessary' nor 'sufficient' condition for sensation. Not necessary because one can imagine a pain so great or so slight that there is no disposition to behave.

Consider the stoics, who have so trained themselves that they have exterminated any such disposition. Again, particular disposition or behaviour is not a sufficient condition for sensation because you can imagine such dispositions arising from other causes such as the desire to call attention to yourself, to deceive others or imitate a person in pain.

Feeling pain is one thing and behaving or being disposed to behave in certain ways is another. The feeling may produce the disposition to behave but you cannot say they are identical, nor even that the one is a necessary or sufficient condition for the other.

- ■ What is metaphysical behaviourism?
- ☐ Metaphysical behaviourism on the other hand is the theory about the nature of consciousness and the analysis of expressions referring to consciousness.

10.2.2 The First Person or Subjective Account of Consciousness

So far, you have sought to define consciousness in terms of what you can observe in others. That is, you have treated consciousness as if it were simply a public or objective phenomenon. You have however over-looked a most obvious but important fact: that you yourself are conscious too and that you do not have to restrict yourself to what you observe in others in trying to understand what consciousness is.

According to the first person account, if each of us turns his attention inward to what is going on in himself when he is conscious, then you will see that being conscious is not a matter of behaving in particular (conscious) ways; the behaviour is merely the outward manifestation of the inner state and this inner state is there to be observed by us in our individual cases.

The First person account of consciousness refers to that which results from attending to how things are in one's own case. For instance, when you asks a man who has been hit on the head whether he is conscious? What do you mean by that question either in the affirmative or negative? It is our belief that if he is still conscious, he will respond to certain stimuli, such as opening his eyes when he is spoken to, or flinching at his noise, or even tries to get up.

But assuming he is not conscious any longer, he will not be able to do those things until he regains his consciousnesses. Thus, Consciousness could be defined in terms of the kind of bodily behaviour elicited by certain sorts of stimuli.[102]

The word "consciousness" has often been taken as a compact reference to all that is mysterious about the first-person; but obviously, there are some third-person aspects which are very relevant to the word. By the thesis of the first person account of consciousness is not just behaviour; rather, behind the behaviour is a sharp agonizing sensation which is behind and the cause of the behaviour.

This calls for the causal theory of mind. There are, however, some challenges to the first person account or the identity theory; for if the mind is the brain, and the functions of the mind, such as thinking and deliberating, wishing and pondering, are electro-physical operations of the brain processes, how do you explain belief, faith, trust and other extra-sensory perceptions such as telepathy?

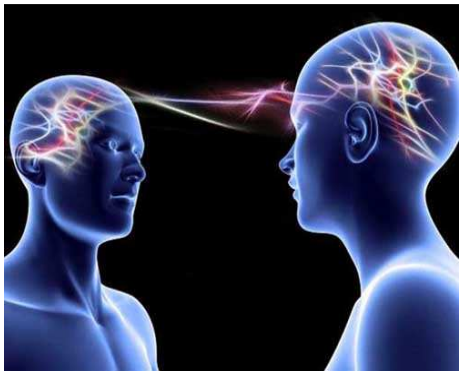

Figure 10.4: Telepathy

Source: http://www.crystalinks.com/telepathy.html

[102] Cf. Jerome A. Shaffer, *Philosophy of Mind* (U.S.A: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1968), p.15

Summary of Study Session 10

In Study Session 10, you have learnt that:

1. The nature of consciousness. It attempted an articulation of the nature of the human mind in the effort to understand the central attributes of consciousness. In sum, the session examines the first person and the third person account of consciousness.
2. The third person account of consciousness, it is argued, defined consciousness in a person's response to stimuli. In other words, it is understood that one is conscious if one elicits certain forms of behaviour corresponding to certain stimuli. And so the third person account of consciousness is another expression for behaviourism.
3. Some of the difficulties associated with third person account; difficulties such as pretensions, imitations, and holding back of any corresponding behaviour to show response to certain stimuli. This therefore necessitated the proposing of the first person theory of consciousness which relates to the mind/brain identity theory.
4. In first person theory of consciousness, consciousness is not just behaviour, rather behind the behaviour is a sharp agonizing sensation which is behind and the cause of the behaviour. This calls for the causal theory of mind.
5. Some challenges to the first person account or the identity theory; for if the mind is the brain, and the functions of the mind, such as thinking and deliberating, wishing and pondering, are electro-physical operations of the brain processes, how do you explain belief, faith, trust and other extra-sensory perceptions such as telepathy**?**

Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs) for Study Session 10

Now that you have completed this study session, you can assess how well you have achieved its Learning outcomes by answering the following questions. Write your answers in your study Diary and discuss them with your Tutor at the next! Support meeting. You can check your answers with the Notes on the Self-Assessment questions at the end of this Module.

SAQ 10.1

Discuss the content of consciousness

SAQ 10.2

1. What do you understand by the first person account of consciousness? What are the challenges thereof?

Notes on Study Session 10

SAQ 10.1

The contents of consciousness encompass all that you are conscious of, are aware of, or experience. These include not only experiences that you commonly associate with yourself, such as thoughts, feelings, images, dreams, body sensations, and so on, but also the experienced three-dimensional world (the phenomenal world) beyond the body surface.

SAQ 10.2

1. The First person account of consciousness refers to that which results from attending to how things are in one's own case. For instance, when you asks a man who has been hit on the head whether he is conscious? What do you mean by that question either in the affirmative or negative? It is our belief that if he is still conscious, he will respond to certain stimuli, such as opening his eyes when he is spoken to, or flinching at his noise, or even tries to get up.

2. Some challenges to the first person account or the identity theory; for if the mind is the brain, and the functions of the mind, such as thinking and deliberating, wishing and pondering, are electro-physical operations of the brain processes, how do you explain belief, faith, trust and other extra-sensory perceptions such as telepathy?

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Study Session 11: The Problem of Causality

Introduction

Suppose you go to your Samsung phone technician with the complaint that it was not receiving signals. Your technician, having opened up the phone looked through it carefully with the eye of a technician and closed it back saying “the phone is not receiving signal but there is no cause”. Note here that your technician is not saying that there is no known cause, or that he does not know the cause but simply that there is no cause.

In other words, the phone’s not receiving signal has no cause. What are you likely to conclude? Of course, for many, the conclusion would be either that the technician does not know the job or that there is a cause, but that he does not know.

What this simply puts across is that the phone’s not receiving signal is an event/effect which must have a cause, and so it is generally believe, very strongly too, that every effect has a cause, and similar effects have similar causes. This is the principle of universal causation or causality for short.

In this study session, you will be learning the concept of causation, the Singular and General causation. You will also learn about the understanding of reductionist and Non-reductionist of causation

Learning Outcomes for Study Session 11

When you have studied this session, you should be able to:

11.1 Discuss the concept of Causation

11.2 Explain the Singular and General Causation

11.3 Briefly explain Reductionist and Non-reductionist Understanding of Causation

11.1 Causation

Causation refers to the relation that holds between two temporally simultaneous or successive events when the first event (the cause) brings about the other (the effect). According to David Hume, when you say of two types of object or event that "X causes Y" (e.g., fire causes smoke), you mean that

i. Xs are "constantly conjoined" with Ys,
ii. Ys follow Xs and not vice versa, and
iii. There is a "necessary connection" between Xs and Ys such that whenever an X occurs, a Y must follow.

Unlike the ideas of contiguity and succession, however, the idea of necessary connection is subjective, in the sense that it derives from the act of contemplating objects or events that you have experienced as being constantly conjoined and succeeding one another in a certain order, rather than from any observable properties in the objects or events themselves.

Figure 11.1: David Hume (7 May 1711 – 25 August 1776)

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Hume

This idea is the basis of the classic problem of induction, which Hume formulated. Hume's definition of causation is an example of a "regularity" analysis. Other types of analysis include

- Counterfactual analysis
- Manipulation analysis, and
- Probabilistic analysis

11.1.1 The Varieties of Causation

Causes can apparently contribute to effects in a variety of ways: by being background or standing conditions, "triggering events", omissions, factors which enhance or inhibit effects, factors that remove a common preventative of an effect, and so on. Traditionally, accounts of causation have focussed on triggering events, but contemporary accounts are increasingly expected to address a greater range of this diversity.

There may also be different notions of cause characteristic of the domains of different sciences. The seemingly indeterministic phenomena of quantum physics may require treatment different from either the seemingly deterministic processes of certain natural sciences or the "quasi-deterministic" processes characteristic of the social sciences, which are often presumed to be objectively deterministic but subjectively uncertain.[103]

Also relevant here is the distinction between teleological (intentional, goal-oriented) and non-teleological causality: while the broadly physical sciences tend not to cite motives and purposes, the plant, animal, human and social sciences often explicitly do so.

Contemporary treatments of teleological causality generally aim to avoid positing anything like entelechies or "vital forces" (of the sort associated with 19th-century accounts of biology), and also to avoid taking teleological goals to be causes that occur after their effects.[104]

On Wright's (1976) "consequence-aetiology" account, teleological behaviours (for instance, stalking a prey) are not caused by future catching (which, after all, might not occur), but rather by the fact that the behaviour in question has been often enough successful in the past that it has been evolutionarily selected for; and for creatures capable of intentional representation, alternative explanations may be available.

[103] Cf. Paul Humphreys, "Causation in the Social Sciences: An Overview", *Synthese*, 68 (1986), pp. 3-4

[104] See Wesley Salmon, *Scientific Explanation and the Causal Structure of the World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984)

Figure 11.2: Larry Wright

Source: http://philosophy.ucr.edu/larry-wright/

While teleological causes raise interesting questions for the causal underpinnings of behaviour (especially concerning whether a naturalistically acceptable account of intentionality can be given), the focus in what follows will be on non-teleological causality, reflecting the primary concern of most contemporary philosophers of causation.

- ■ Do the physical sciences tend not to cite motives and purposes?
- ☐ Yes, the physical sciences tend not to cite motives and purposes unlike the plant, animal, human and social sciences.

11.2 Singular and General Causation

Is all singular causation ultimately general? Different answers reflect different understandings of the notion of "production" at issue in the platitude "causes produce their effects". On generalist (or "covering law") accounts, causal production is a matter of law: roughly, event c causes event e just in case c and e are instances of terms in a law connecting events of c's type with events of e's type.

The generalist interpretation is in part motivated by the need to ground inductive reasoning: unless causal relations are subsumed by causal laws, one will be unjustified in inferring that events of c's type will, in the future, cause events of e's type. Another motivation stems from thinking that identifying a sequence of events as causal requires identifying the sequence as falling under a (possibly unknown) law.

Alternatively, singularists interpret causal production as involving a singular causal process (variously construed), that is metaphysically prior to laws.

Singularists also argue for the epistemological priority of singular causes, maintaining that one can identify a sequence as causal without assuming that the sequence falls under a law, even when the sequence violates modal presuppositions (as in Fair's 1979 case: intuitively, one could recognize a glass's breaking as causal, even if one antecedently thought glasses of that type were unbreakable).

Counterfactual accounts analyze singular causes in terms of counterfactual conditionals (as a first pass, event c causes event e just in case if c had not occurred, then e would not have occurred).

Whether a counterfactual account should be considered singularist, however, depends on whether the truth of the counterfactuals is grounded in laws connecting types of events or in, for example, propensities (objective single-case chances) understood as irreducible to laws. Yet another approach to the issue of singular vs. general causes is to deny that either is reducible to the other, and to rather give independent treatments of each type.[105]

- ■ How did singularists saw causal production?
- ☐ Singularists interpret causal production as involving a singular causal process (variously construed), that is metaphysically prior to laws.

11.3 Reductionist and Non-reductionist Understanding of Causation

There are at least three questions of reducibility at issue in philosophical accounts of causation, which largely cut across the generalist/singularist distinction. The first concerns whether causal facts (for example, the holding of causal relations) are reducible to non-causal facts (for example, the holding of certain spatiotemporal relations).

Hume's generalist reduction of causality has a projectivist or antirealist flavour: according to Hume, the seeming "necessary connexion" between cause and effect is a projection of a psychological habit of association between ideas, which habit is formed by regular experience of events of the cause type being spatially contiguous and temporally prior to events of the effect type.

[105] Cf. Elliot Sober, "Two Concepts of Cause", In Peter D. Asquith and Philip Kitcher (ed.), *Philosophy of Science Association 1984*, vol. 2 (East Lansing, Michigan: Philosophy of Science Association, 1985), pp. 406-405

Contemporary neo-Humeans dispense with Hume's psychologism, focusing instead on the possibility of reducing causal relations and laws to objectively and non-causally characterized associations between events. Whether such accounts are appropriately deemed "anti-realist" is a matter of dispute, one philosopher's reductive elimination being another's reductive introduction. Non-reductive generalists (often called "realists") by way of contrast, take modally robust causal connection between event types to be an irreducible feature of reality. Singularists also come in reductive or realist varieties.

A second question of reducibility concerns whether a given account of causation aims to provide a conceptual analysis of the concept hence to account for causation in bizarre worlds, containing magic, causal action at a distance, and so on, or instead to account for the causal relation in the actual world, in terms of physically or metaphysically more fundamental entities or processes.

These different aims make a difference to what sort of cases and counterexamples philosophers of causation take to heart when developing or assessing theories. A common intermediate methodology focuses on central cases, leaving the verdict on far-fetched cases as "spoils for the victor".

A third question of reducibility concerns whether macro-causal relations (holding between entities, or expressed by laws, in the special sciences) are reducible to micro-causal relations (holding between entities, or expressed by laws, in fundamental physics).

This question arises from a general desire to understand the ontological and causal underpinnings of the structured hierarchy of the sciences, and from a need to address, as a special case, the "problem of mental causation":

The problem of whether and how mental events (for example, a feeling of pain) can be causally efficacious vis-´a-vis certain effects (for example, a grimacing) which appear also to be caused by the brain (and ultimately, fundamental physical) events upon which the mental events depend.

Causal reductionists suggest that mental events (more generally, macro-level events) are efficacious in virtue of supervening on (or being identical with) efficacious physical events.[106]

Many worry, however, that these approaches render macro-level events causally irrelevant (or "epiphenomenal"). Non-reductive approaches to macro-level causation come in both physicalist and non-physicalist varieties.

[106] Cf. Davidson, Donald, "Mental Events", In L. Foster and J. Swanson (ed.), *Experience and Theory* (Amherst: Massachusetts University Press, 1970), pp. 257–256.

Some physicalists posit a relation (e.g., the determinable/determination relation or proper parthood) between macro- and micro-level events which entails that the set of causal powers of a given macro-level event m (roughly, the set of causal interactions that the event, in appropriate circumstances, could enter into) are a proper subset of those of the micro-level event p upon which m depends.

On this "proper subset" strategy the fact that the sets of causal powers are different provides some grounds for claiming that m is efficacious in its own right, but since each individual causal power of m is identical with a causal power of p, the two events are not in causal competition.

On another non-reductive strategy – emergentism – the causal efficacy of at least some macro-level events (notably, mental events) is due to their having genuinely new causal powers – powers not possessed by the physical events upon which the mental events depend.

When the effect in question is physical, such powers violate the causal closure of the physical (the claim that every physical effect has a fully sufficient physical cause); but such a violation arguably isn't at odds with any cherished scientific principles, such as conversation laws.[107]

Features of Causality include asymmetry, temporal direction and transitivity. Causality is asymmetric, if, for instance, an event c causes event e, then e does not cause c. Causality also generally proceeds from the past to the future. How to account for these data remains unclear.

The problem of explaining asymmetry is particularly pressing for accounts that reductively analyze causality in terms of laws of association, for it is easy to construct cases where the laws are reversible, rather than where the causation is not.

Both the asymmetry and temporal direction of causality can be accommodated (as in Hume) by stipulatively identifying causal with temporal asymmetry: causes differ from their effects in being prior to their effects. This approach correctly rules out simultaneous and backwards causation, which are generally taken to be live (or at least not too distant) possibilities.

Accounts on which the general temporal direction of causation is determined by physical or psychological processes may avoid the latter difficulties.

On Reichenbach's account, the temporal direction of causation reflects the direction of "conjunctive forks": processes where a common cause produces joint effects, and where, in accordance with what Reichenbach called "the principle of the common cause", the probabilistic

[107] Cf. Brian McLaughlin, "The Rise and Fall of British Emergentism", In Ansgar Beckerman, Hans Flohr, and Jaegwon Kim (ed.), *Emergence or Reduction? Essays on the Prospects of Non-reductive Physicalism* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1992), pp. 49–50.

dependence of the effects on each other is "screened off" when the common cause is taken into account.[108]

Such forks are, he claimed, always (or nearly always) open to the future and closed to the past. Some have suggested that the direction of causation is fixed by the direction of increasing entropy, or (more speculatively) by the direction of quantum collapse of the wave packet.

Alternatively, Price (1992) suggests that human experience of manipulating causes provides a basis for the (projected) belief that causality is forward-directed in time. These accounts explain the usual temporal direction of causal processes, while allowing the occasional exception.

It remains the case, however, that accommodating the asymmetry of causation by appeal to the direction of causation rules out reducing the direction of time to the (general) direction of causation, which some, for instance, Reichenbach, have wanted to do.

More importantly, neither stipulative nor non-stipulative appeals to temporal direction seem to explain the asymmetry of causation, which intuitively has more to do with causes producing their effects (in some robust sense of 'production') than with causes being prior to their effects.

Non-reductive accounts on which causality involves manifestations of powers or transfers of energy (or other conserved quantities) may be better situated to provide the required explanation, if such manifestations or transfers can be understood as directed (which remains controversial).

Another feature commonly associated with causality is transitivity: if c causes d, and d causes e, then c causes e.

This assumption has come in for question of late, largely due to the following sort of case: A man's finger is severed in a factory accident; a surgeon reattaches the finger, which afterwards becomes perfectly functional. The accident caused the surgery, and the surgery caused the finger's functionality; but it seems odd to say that the accident caused the finger's functionality.[109]

- ■ What other name are Non-reductive generalists called?
- □ They are also called Realist

[108] Cf. Hans Reichenbach, *The Direction of Time* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1956), p. 57

[109] Cf. Igal Kvart, "Transitivity and Preemption of Causal Relevance", *Philosophical Studies*, LXIV (1991), pp. 128-129

Summary of Study Session 11

In Study Session 11, you have learnt that:

1. Focus was the notion and phenomenon of causality or determinism. It is also known as universal causation. In the session, an attempt was made to represent the relationship between cause and event, bringing to the fore types of causes and implications for everyday living. The idea of causality, it was noted, is central to the method of science as it draws a necessary and sufficient relationship between causes and effects.

2. The study session concludes by referring to the objections raised by reductionist, such as David Hume, to the traditional understanding of causality; arguing that the conception of causality by which a necessary and sufficient condition is established between cause and effect is an unfounded illusion. What you refer to as cause and effect is simply a constant conjunction to which habits and psychological attitudes ascribe a necessary relationship.

Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs) for Study Session 11

Now that you have completed this study session, you can assess how well you have achieved its Learning outcomes by answering the following questions. Write your answers in your study Diary and discuss them with your Tutor at the next! Support meeting. You can check your answers with the Notes on the Self-Assessment questions at the end of this Module.

SAQ 11.1

List the 4 types of analysis mention in the session

SAQ 11.2

Differentiate between a singularist and generalist account of causation

SAQ 11.3

What is the position of the reductionist with regards to cause and effect?

Notes on Study Session 11

SAQ 11.1

They are:

- ❖ Counterfactual analysis
- ❖ Manipulation analysis, and
- ❖ Probabilistic analysis
- ❖ Regularity analysis

SAQ 11.2

On generalist accounts, causal production is a matter of law: roughly, event c causes event e just in case c and e are instances of terms in a law connecting events of c's type with events of e's type. The generalist interpretation is in part motivated by the need to ground inductive reasoning: unless causal relations are subsumed by causal laws, one will be unjustified in inferring that events of c's type will, in the future, cause events of e's type. Another motivation stems from thinking that identifying a sequence of events as causal requires identifying the sequence as falling under a (possibly unknown) law.

Alternatively, singularists interpret causal production as involving a singular causal process (variously construed), that is metaphysically prior to laws. Singularists also argue for the epistemological priority of singular causes, maintaining that one can identify a sequence as causal without assuming that the sequence falls under a law, even when the sequence violates modal presuppositions

SAQ 11.3

Causal reductionists suggest that mental events (more generally, macro-level events) are efficacious in virtue of supervening on (or being identical with) efficacious physical events.

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Study Session 12: The Rejection of Metaphysics

Introduction

David Hume, The 18th century British empiricist, is standardly described as the one who took the orientation of empiricism to its logical conclusion. One of the central ideas of David Hume is his rejection of metaphysics through his thesis concerning the nature of notions such as causation or causality, God, religion, and morality as well as history or historical statements.

Therefore, David Hume's contribution to the discourse of metaphysics can best be understood in his treatment of metaphysics as sophistry and illusory. Central concepts such as causality, he argued, cannot be conclusively explained in any reasonable sense. For him there are two aspects of empiricism that can assist us in accessing reality.

One of such consists in ideas and the other impressions. Whatever is not the object of either of this two could not be a reality. For whatever is given to us through impression, that is, direct contact with the external world is knowable. In the same vein, whatever is given to us through ideas that are backed up by impressions are knowable.

In this study session, you will learn about the central arguments in Hume's discourse with particular reference to his rejection of metaphysics. You will also evaluate the place of metaphysics and metaphysical notions along with religious experiences and moral judgments in everyday life experience.

Learning Outcomes for Study Session 12

When you have studied this session, you should be able to:

12.1 Discuss the rejection of Metaphysics

12.2 Explain Hume stand against Metaphysics

12.3 Explain Carnap's rejection of Metaphysics

12.1 Rejection of Metaphysics

At a point in its historical development, metaphysics as a discipline started to receive very harsh and devastating criticisms, most especially from the empiricists' philosophers, starting with David Hume, through Immanuel Kant and other neo-Kantians, down to Ludwig Wittgenstein, Moritz Schlick, Rudolf Carnap, Karl Popper and Alfred J. Ayer.

The main reason which led to the rejection of metaphysics is the rise of modern science and the realisation that its success has been due to the refusal to accept any view about the world which is not supported by evidence.[110]

These criticisms culminated in what was later captioned as the 'Rejection of Metaphysics'. In fact, Kant's own acknowledgement that he was awoken from the dogmatic slumber of rational metaphysics by Hume's empirical theory marks the turning point where he broke off decisively from metaphysics.

Figure 12.1: Immanuel Kant (22 April 1724 – 12 February 1804)

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Immanuel_Kant

Hume had earlier maintained that metaphysics is impossible because the human mind finds itself lost in a maze of contradictions when it goes beyond the realm of possible experience. From Kant down to the era of Logical Positivism, various philosophers of empirical bent expressed their disdain for metaphysics.

But the Logical Positivists further reinforced empiricism in their drive against metaphysics by maintaining that for a proposition to be verifiable, it must pass through the purgatory of sense perception, but that metaphysics derives from the recognition of some unique reality that does

[110] Cf. Glenn Langford, *Philosophy and Education: An Introduction* (London: Macmillan, 1968), p. 86

not conform to empirical cognition, but can only be apprehended by metaphysical speculative faculties of the mind.[111]

Logical Positivism was founded by Moritz Schlick but after the death of Schlick, the leadership of the school fell on Rudolf Carnap. The aim of Logical Positivism was to free philosophy from metaphysics. For many of the positivists, metaphysics is not only an impossible and difficult enterprise to engage in, the term 'metaphysical' carries with it, the imputation of emptiness or sophistry.

Figure 12.2: Moritz Schlick (April 14, 1882 – June 22, 1936)

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moritz_Schlick

As Moritz Lazerowitz succinctly puts it: "whatever it [metaphysics] is, its nature, still remains unknown to us".[112] Following from this, Karl Pearson concludes that "metaphysics is built either on air or on quicksand".[113] Let us examine more closely, first, Hume's criticism of metaphysics and, then, the argument of Rudolf Carnap in his article titled "The Elimination of Metaphysics through Logical Analysis of Language" (1959).

- ■ What was the reaction of the positivists to metaphysics
- ☐ The positivists believed metaphysics is not only an impossible but also difficult enterprise to engage in

[111] See A. Fadahunsi, *Metaphysics: A Historical and Thematic Introduction* (Ibadan: Hope Publication, 2004)
[112] Cf. Moritz Lazerowitz, *The Structure of Metaphysics* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd, 1955), p. 65

[113] See A. Fadahunsi, *Metaphysics: A Historical and Thematic Introduction* (Ibadan: Hope Publication, 2004)

12.2 Hume against Metaphysics

With the ground work laid in the theory of knowledge, Hume goes on to apply the empirical criterion of meaning to the areas of philosophy that had been the centre of so much controversy and confusion. He takes as his first target the venerable idea of substance, which is considered as the point that marks his first rather break from the traditions of the past, including that of his own British empiricism.

Figure 12.3: David Hume

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Hume

Although Locke and Berkeley were card carry empiricists and sort to subject all knowledge claims to the bar of experience, they agreed with Descartes that the idea of substance was indispensable.

For instance, Locke believed the external world was populated with material substances. He thought it incomprehensible that there was no entity or substance in which the apple's qualities, inheres. However, Hume challenges us to find the idea of substance in our flirting experiences of colour, sounds and taste.[114]

Ontological metaphysics in the development of British empiricism comes to a dead end in these arguments of Hume (as far as they are accepted, of course). He cuts the last slender thread between the perceptions of the mind and any kind of independent external cause.

This does not mean that anyone ceases to believe in external causes of perceptions or independent physical objects; rather, for Hume, the imagination or fancy is so strong that he

[114] Cf. William Lawhead, *Voyage of Discovery*, p. 339

takes it for granted that whatever may be the reader's opinion at this present moment, hence he will be persuaded there is both an external and internal world.[115]

It is the imagination or fancy and not reason or the senses that leads us to believe in this double world. Ontological metaphysics is concerned with establishing a rational theory of the link between these two supposed worlds, but Hume's arguments, if correct, establish that only imagination can possibly operate in this area.

To the extent that metaphysics is based on reason there is the hope that it can achieve some degree of certainty and lay claim to being a rational discipline. But if metaphysics is dissociated from reason and must depend upon imagination it is open to the charge of being in the same class with wish-fulfilment dreams or idle conjecture, for which general agreement among men is unlikely.

Reason cannot trust imagination and if the only way to knowledge of an independent external world is through imagination, then philosophers, as men of reason, ought to give up looking for such knowledge. Thus, no matter how strongly our imaginations assure us that there is an independent external world which is the source of our perceptions, "profound and intense reflection" leads us to a "sceptical doubt" that we must respect.

- ■ Were Descartes, Locke and Berkeley were card carry empiricists?
- ☐ No, Descartes was not a card carry empiricists

12.3 Rudolf Carnap's Rejection of Metaphysics

Rudolf Carnap's aim, like that of every positivist, was to purge philosophy of metaphysical and psychological questions and thus reduce the proper task of philosophy to that of logical analysis. To start with, he identified three kinds of related problems and doctrines in traditional philosophy: Metaphysics, Psychology and Logic.

[115] David Hume, bk. 1, pt. 4, sec. 2, p. 218

Figure 12.4: Rudolf Carnap

Source: http://www.iep.utm.edu/carnap/

His intention was to use the method of logical analysis (which is the main business of philosophy) to purge philosophy of metaphysical and psychological claims which are not amenable to the verification theory. Thus, his main business was a rejection of metaphysics using the verification theory and in this way, also, rejects logical atomism which was said to be a form of metaphysics.

To do this, he first explained what he meant by the method of verification. The verification theory consisted of the notion that the meaning of a statement is the method of its verification.[116] The assumption behind this principle was that verification must always rest on empirical observation.

Any proposition that does not pass this test would be said to have no meaning. He distinguished between direct and indirect verification. These two forms of verification are central to scientific method, for, in the field of science, every proposition either assert something about present perception or about future perceptions.

In both cases, verification is either through direct perception or by logical connection of already verified propositions. As he puts it:

> A statement 'P' which is not directly verified can only be verified by direct verification of statements deduced from 'P' together with other already verified statements.[117]

[116] Cf. Rudolph Carnap, "The Elimination of Metaphysics through Logical Analysis of Language", in Alfred Ayer (ed.), *Logical Positivism* (New York: The Free Press 1959), p. 63

[117] Cf. Rudolph Carnap, "The Elimination of Metaphysics through Logical Analysis of Language", p. 65

He however pointed out the deficiency of the indirect method and added that universal statements cannot be so verified because the number of deducible instances (by the help of other statements already verified or directly verified) is infinite. Rudolf then applied the verification theory to statements of metaphysics.

Metaphysicians, he argued, cannot avoid making their statements non-verifiable because if they made them verifiable, the decision about the truth or falsehood of their doctrine would depend upon experience and therefore belong to the region of science, and this will contradict their earlier claims to teaching knowledge which is of a higher level than that of empirical science.

Thus, they are compelled to cut all connection between their statements and experience, and precisely by this procedure, they deprive them (such statements) of any sense. The same problem he says applies to all philosophical doctrines which asserts or deny the reality or unreality of something.

According to Carnap, normative ethics and value judgments belong to the realm of metaphysics. He agreed that though there can be a science of ethics in the form of psychological or sociological or other empirical investigation about the actions of human being and their effects on other people.

He insisted that the philosophy of moral values or norms does not rest on any empirical facts; it rather a pretended investigation of "what is good or evil", "what it is right to do" or 'what it is wrong to do". Such statements do not assert anything and can neither be proved nor disproved.

According to Carnap, the statement of normative ethics, whether they have the form of rules or the form of value statements, have no theoretical sense, are not scientific. Most philosophers have been deceived into thinking that a value statement is really an assertive statement and must be true or false.

But actually, a value statement is nothing but a command in a misleading grammatical form."[118]

To further demolish metaphysics from the confines of a genuine philosophical business, Carnap distinguished between the expressive and representative or cognitive functions of language.

For example, the statement "now I am merry" is a linguistic utterance which assert the "merry mood' and can be either true or false, but a word like "laughter" merely expresses feelings but do not assert it, and such word performs only an expressive function, and not a representative function.

[118] Cf. Rudolph Carnap, "The Elimination of Metaphysics through Logical Analysis of Language", p. 70

Carnap asserted that metaphysical statements have only an expressive function and are therefore neither true nor false because they assert nothing. Metaphysical statements cannot therefore pass the test of the verification theory.

Having trashed out metaphysical problems and doctrines, Carnap then proceeded to eliminate psychological questions from philosophy. His main task here was to debunk the belief that psychology is inseparably part of philosophy. To him, the propositions of psychology belong to the region of empirical science, in just the same way the propositions of biology and chemistry.

When you look at the historical development of the sciences however, you see a link between philosophy and other sciences; but this "umbilical cord" between philosophy and the other sciences (including psychology) has been cut and many philosophers have yet to realise this.

This leads many into dealing with psychological questions (which concern all kinds of so-called mental events, feelings, thoughts, images, and so on) as if they were logical ones. "The questions of psychology" he argues "can be answered only by experience, not by philosophising".

Having eliminated metaphysical and psychological questions, the only proper task of philosophy now is logical analysis. What then is logical analysis? Carnap explained that the "method" he used in eliminating metaphysical and psychological questions from philosophy is itself logical analysis.

He then sets out to explain the character of the statements which are the result of logical analysis. To this, he agreed with Hume that "only the statements of mathematics and empirical science have sense and that all other statements are without sense" and should therefore be "committed to the flame".

12.3.1 A Critique of Carnap's Argument

When Carnap applied the verification principle to metaphysics and classical ethics, the principle demolishes them and renders them meaningless. He was however not unaware that the assertion made by the principle itself cannot be empirically verified, and so by its own criterion, the principle is nonsensical.

He attempted to tackle this major defect by appealing to the defence of Wittgenstein to such a problem in his *Tractatus Logico Philosophicus*, but rejected Wittgenstein's view on grounds of inconsistency, thereby making this criticism a major threat to the verification theory. Rudolf

Carnap's blanket rejection of metaphysics and morals was later turned down and or reversed by other positivists.

A.J. Ayer described this temper by saying that "the metaphysician is treated no longer as a criminal but as a patient: there may be good reasons why he says the strange things he does."[119] Ethics in Ayer's view is no longer nonsense but a discipline whose language is analysed both for its relation to fact and for its value in pointing to a problem.

Figure 12.5: Sir Alfred Jules "Freddie" Ayer (29 October 1910 – 27 June 1989)

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A._J._Ayer

Ludwig Wittgenstein also did not reject the statements of metaphysics outright. To him, metaphysical language may indeed create confusion but the central concern of philosophy is to deal with problems that baffle and confuse us because of the lack of clarity.

Philosophy, he argues, does not provide men with new or more information, but adds clarity by a careful description of language. This new position by Wittgenstein informed the formation of the 'Conceptual Elucidation School', to which some of the positivists later belong.

Another major defect of Carnap's position is the serious question of "what constitutes verification". The assumption behind the verification principle was that whatever could be said meaningfully would be ultimately reducible to observational statement.

However, scientific statements are mostly the basis of scientific prediction and one would wonder how such statements that make a prediction can be verified by observation. There is no single fact that can verify, the future truth of a general scientific statement; and as such, a statement when tested with the verification principle will be meaningless.

[119] See A. Fadahunsi, *Metaphysics: A Historical and Thematic Introduction* (Ibadan: Hope Publication, 2004)

To save the verification principle from this attack, a distinction was drawn between weak and strong forms of the verification principle. The weak form simply says that a statement must be at least capable of verification or verifiable in principle. This still has not been able to save the verification theory, thereby tuning down, and the initial intensity of positivism against metaphysics.

Carnap's rejection of metaphysics, if accepted, will reduce the traditional functions of philosophy and thus reduce the relevance of philosophy to contemporary issues of life and existence. The reality of metaphysical entities cannot be completely denied and science is not equipped enough to tackle metaphysical problems which are not deducible from experience.

Again, a rejection of moral norms and value judgments as "nonsense" is also unfair. Norms and value judgments are the building block on which orderliness and peaceful co-existence is based in any society. Every society has its set of moral values (relative or non relative).

A rejection of such norms as "nonsense" is a suggestion that the society be organised without set rules and values, and such a society will be more or less run like a 'state of nature' with all its attendant inconveniences.

- ■ Who formed the formation of the Conceptual Elucidation School?
- ☐ Wittgenstein informed the school

Summary of Study Session 12

In Study Session 12, you have learnt that:

1. It was the position of Hume that reality is given to us through the sense as impressions and ideas, and whatever is not given in the light of these media, that is, impressions and ideas cannot be judged to be real; for Hume they are meaningless nonsense.
2. Subject-matters like causality, induction, moral judgement and the notion of God stand condemn as unreal and illusory according to Hume's empiricism. Of course there is a very close affinity between the epistemic status and ontological status of any being or reality in Hume's considerations.
3. There is a straddles between epistemology and metaphysics. To be sure, the Humean project represents a patron oracle to the doctrine expounded in the works of logical positivists such as Rudolph Carnap, Moritz Schlick and A. J. Ayer.
4. In Ayer's rejection of metaphysics, he attempted a systematic analyses and arguments why metaphysics and metaphysical concepts are not able to meet the criterion of meaningfulness. And this formed the foundation of the positivist's philosophy that emphasized the analytic-synthetic distinction, meaningful ideas must be related to matters of facts and the relations of ideas, or analytic and synthetic statements. Beyond this for Hume and the positivists every other conceptualization could only be meaningless nonsense.

Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs) for Study Session 12

Now that you have completed this study session, you can assess how well you have achieved its Learning outcomes by answering the following questions. Write your answers in your study Diary and discuss them with your Tutor at the next! Support meeting. You can check your answers with the Notes on the Self-Assessment questions at the end of this Module.

SAQ 12.1

What is the general name of philosophers who rejected metaphysics? List 5 of them

SAQ 12.2

How would you evaluate David Hume's rejection of metaphysics?

SAQ 12.3

1. Explain the verification theory
2. What was Rudolf problem with the Metaphysicians?

Notes on Study Session 12

SAQ 12.1

They are generally called Positivists and they include:

1. David Hume
2. Immanuel Kant
3. Ludwig Wittgenstein
4. Moritz Schlick
5. Rudolf Carnap
6. Karl Popper
7. Alfred J. Ayer.

SAQ 12.2

Locke believed the external world was populated with material substances. He thought it incomprehensible that there was no entity or substance in which the apple's qualities, inheres. However, Hume challenges us to find the idea of substance in our flirting experiences of colour, sounds and taste.

SAQ 12.3

1. The verification theory consisted of the notion that the meaning of a statement is the method of its verification. The assumption behind this principle was that verification must always rest on empirical observation.

2. Rudolf believed Metaphysicians cannot avoid making their statements non-verifiable because if they made them verifiable, the decision about the truth or falsehood of their doctrine would depend upon experience and therefore belong to the region of science, and this will contradict their earlier claims to teaching knowledge which is of a higher level than that of empirical science.

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Hume, David. bk. 1, pt. 4, sec. 2, p. 218

General Conclusion

The foregoing study session series represents an attempt to further introduce (it is believed that this course, PHI 301, is a build-up on PHI 206) students to the discourse of metaphysics as represented in the philosophies of the various philosophers treated in this lecture series.

To be sure, students for this course may have known little or nothing about the metaphysics of the philosophers examined here. And so, the sessions are directed at adequate articulation and appreciation of metaphysics as espoused by the various philosophers treated.

It begins, in study session one, with a discourse on the metaphysics of the Pre-Socratics. The focus in this session was to examine the various attempts of early Greek philosophers to critically investigate the nature of reality by determining the basic stuff of reality, as well as account for the principle behind the phenomenon of change in reality.

After the examination of the metaphysics of the pre-Socratics, you began a series of sequential (as it was found necessary) treatment of the metaphysics of various philosophers. Plato's metaphysics, which began this series, was examined in study session two. Here attention was given to Plato's theory of Forms, a theory which, it was found out, is as a result of his distinct of the world of forms and the word of changing reality.

In the third study session, our focus moved to the discussion of Plato's student, Aristotle. Here attention was made at understanding how Aristotle attempted to construct his philosophical or metaphysical realism out of Plato's philosophical or metaphysical idealism. This was done by looking at matter and form, substance and accident. These concepts, it is understood, are found at the very core of metaphysical inquires.

In the fourth study session focus shifted to the medieval era, with the metaphysics of Thomas Aquinas in view. One of the central issues of the metaphysics of Aquinas, it is understood, is the nature of "God-talk", by which is meant, how you speak about God. And so, the various types of predication as espoused by Aquinas were examined, with the predication by analogy found to be the most appropriate of speaking about God.

The fifth study session focused on the metaphysics of Rene Descartes. To this end, the lecture examines certain issues that characterize Cartesian metaphysics, such as the notions of God, the mind, the self and the world. The ontological bases for all these notions are examined and are to be articulated if you are to gain a considerable understanding of Descartes epistemology.

You examined, in study session six, the metaphysics of Baruch Spinoza, which, it was stated, is characterized by pantheistic monism. And so, the metaphysics of Spinoza was identified with his conception of substance and the world as aspects or attributes of this substance. This substance he referred to as nature or God of which every other thing is an extension.

The metaphysics of G. W. Leibniz came to focus in study session seven. Leibniz's postulate of the thesis known as monadology, wherein there is the supreme monad through whom all other existences that are windowless monad relate, was examined.

Identifying the metaphysics of Leibniz with the monistic tradition, it was stated that Leibniz spoke of the existence of all other things in the world, including humans as windowless monads, relating with one another via the monad monadum (Supreme monad).

Study session eight was a focused on the metaphysics of John Locke, which centred on the rejection of innate ideas. The lecture presented the argument of Locke in this regard is that the doctrine of innate ideas is not correct.

Study session nine was a presentation of the essence of the metaphysics of George Berkeley, which is that reality is made up of ideas, and since ideas are of the mind, the most fundamentals of reality are the mind plus the ideas.

In study session ten, the nature of consciousness was examined. It attempted an articulation of the nature of the human mind in the effort to understand the central attributes of consciousness. In sum, the lecture examines the first person and the third person account of consciousness. The third person account of consciousness, it is argued, defined consciousness in a person's response to stimuli.

In lecture eleven, the focus was the notion and phenomenon of causality or determinism, also known as universal causation. In the lecture attempt was made to represent the relationship between cause and event, bringing to the fore types of causes and implications for everyday living. The idea of causality, it was noted, is central to the method of science as it draws a necessary and sufficient relationship between causes and effects.

In lecture twelve, attempt was made at a systematic analysis of the discourse on metaphysics in the light of Hume's rejection of the discipline. It was the position of Hume that reality is given to us through the sense as impressions and ideas, and whatever is not given in the light of these media, that is, impressions and ideas cannot be judged to be real; for Hume they are meaningless nonsense.

To be sure, the Humean project represents a patron oracle to the doctrine expounded in the works of logical positivists such as Rudolph Carnap, Moritz Schlick and A. J. Ayer.

It is important to state here that a course of this nature would be seen as a rather brief rundown of the philosophies of various philosophers in one of the core areas of philosophy, metaphysics. Its spread may not be total and its depth may not be very profound, but it represents a large enough and deep enough inquiry needed for an understanding of the metaphysics of the philosophers treated here.

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