

Problems of Metaphysical Philosophy

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Introduction

The word problem as used in this context is a noun and it could mean difficulty, puzzle or question to which answer or solution has to be given. When we therefore speak of the problems of metaphysical philosophy we have in mind those recurrent issues in metaphysics which border on human existence and influence our daily existence. We say these problems are recurrent in the sense that they defile any attempt to give final answer(s) to them. Life itself is one huge problem which continues to throw up puzzles, riddles and mysteries for us to ponder and wonder upon. Metaphysics is one of the ways philosophy employs in looking at the problems of existence with a view to proffering solutions to these life problems. To speak of metaphysical philosophy therefore, is simply another way of technically qualifying metaphysics as a core branch of philosophy. And because metaphysics is meant to solve certain problems that are fundamentally metaphysical, we say that metaphysics as a core branch of philosophy is an action theory intended for problem solving. "Problem solving is a basic intellectual process that has been refined and systematized for the various challenges people face" (*Microsoft Encarta*, 2008).

Recall that philosophy defiles a univocal definition. In the first instance, it is the only discipline that begins by way of self-criticism after which it proceeds to examine the world at large. In doing this, it tries to provide comprehensive thought systems considered to be adequate in tackling existent problems. Like existence itself, to pigeonhole philosophy has become extremely difficult all because philosophy is a concrete being, a concrete reality which in turn deals with the delineation and resolution of concrete beings, concrete realities. As a concrete reality therefore, any attempt to posit a univocal definition for philosophy or to invoke authoritarian answers to the problems of philosophy, would amount to a negation, a limitation of philosophy and its problems. This nature of philosophy robes off on metaphysics, especially as it pertains to the problems of metaphysics.

Problem of the Origin of Metaphysics

How did metaphysics start and where did it first begin? Metaphysics started as an extra-ordinary wonder or perplexity about the universe and it began wherever man appeared and pondered on the mysteries of life. To paraphrase Aristotle, it is through wonder that men begin and originally began to speculate about the universe. This point is reiterated by Pantaleon Iroegbu thus:

Metaphysics is thinking, reflection, critique, into the inner depths of things. You need a mind to do that, and only individuals have minds to think. Only individuals can do metaphysics. A community cannot. It may appropriate the thoughts of given individuals as a common heritage. But the thinking is individually originated. So is metaphysics only individually done (Iroegbu, 1995: 325).

However, metaphysics as a field of knowledge systematically studied for purpose of organizing human experience formerly started with Andronicus of Rhodes, the editor of Aristotle's works. This point is reiterated by Iroegbu who states as follows:

While arranging the works of Aristotle in the Philosophical School of Alexandria (Africa), Andronicus (c. 70 BC) placed the work that Aristotle called First Philosophy, *after* the ones on Physics and titled it *After the Physics*. Hence the title metaphysics was born and has stayed till date (*Ibid.* 21 - 22).

The etymology of *After the Physics* is captured in the Greek expression *Ta meta ta physica* (p. 22) or simply *meta ta physika*. *Meta* means *after*, while *physica* or *physika* means physics or nature. Later *after physics* came to mean *beyond physics* and by this is meant the study of those realities or beings that are beyond the physical world (e.g. God).

Metaphysics as a Problem onto Itself

Metaphysics has been put to various usages over time. The ancients, for instance, understood metaphysics to mean the study of three components of life; cosmology, cosmogony and ontology (Onyewuenyi, 1994: 168 - 177). Following this line of thought C. S. Momoh defines metaphysics as “the philosophical corporate name for cosmology (the structure of what exists), cosmogony (the origin of what exists) and ontology (the constituents of what exists)” (2000: 8). It seems then that from its very beginning metaphysics had concerned itself with two kinds of knowledge; knowledge of the physical and knowledge that goes beyond the physical. The first type of knowledge which deals with the analysis of cosmogony and cosmology we refer to as anthropological metaphysics, the second type of knowledge dealing with the analysis of ontology we refer to as metaphysical ontology. These two realms of metaphysics are technically referred to as *metaphysica specialis* and *metaphysica generalis* respectively.

In the history of Western philosophy, the demarcation of knowledge into metaphysics (as the science of Being) and other disciplines (as the sciences of beings) otherwise known as “Two Realm Cosmology” was first hinted at by Parmenides. However, it is under Aristotle that this division became apparent. He made the distinction between “metaphysics as ‘first philosophy’ and physics (and other sciences) as ‘second philosophy’” (*Encyc. Brit.* 10). Frederick Copleston makes Aristotle’s view on this point accessible.

... that metaphysical science is concerned with beings as such, is the study of being qua being. The special sciences isolate a particular sphere of being, and consider the attributes of being in that sphere, but the metaphysician characteristic, e.g. as living or as quantitative, but rather being itself and its essential attributes as being (Book IV of *Metaphysics*; cited by Copleston, 1946: 290).

Following this line of thought, philosophers as Stagirite, Etienne Gilson and Jose Ortega y’Gasset see metaphysics as a pure rational science or the science of Being in general. As Woodbridge tells us, Stagirite defines metaphysics as that “science which investigates existence as existence and whatever belongs to existence as such” (1959: 242). Etienne Gilson on his part describes metaphysics as “the knowledge gathered by a naturally transcendent reason in its search for the first principles, or first causes, of what is given in sensible experience ... and as metaphysics aims at transcending all particular knowledge, no particular science is competent

either to solve metaphysical problems, or to judge their metaphysical solutions” (pp. 253 & 254). Since for Etienne Gilson metaphysics is a transcendental science native to man, he declares with every confidence that “man is by his very nature a metaphysical animal” (p. 253). Gilson’s description of metaphysics is both Aristotelian and Kantian. This notwithstanding, his rendition of metaphysics as ontology (i.e. as science of Being in general) is corroborated by Jose Ortega y’Gasset who understands philosophy in general as *panotomy* or *the science of totality*. He describes the method of philosophy as *panlogic* or *the law of totality* and the vital tool used by philosophy he calls *Raison Vital* or *Vital Reason*. Besides, metaphysics for him “is an intellectual law unto itself which is self-contained and is thus referred to as the principle of autonomy” (1960: 101).

But the designation of metaphysics as the science of Being in general, in no way implies that the real meaning of Being has been grasped. Being, the real topic of metaphysics was still peripherally addressed. Rather than seek for that very source or fountain which makes metaphysics possible, metaphysics was seen as a science of system building or “architectonics” (Kant, 1970: 653). As a science of system construction, metaphysics remained a science of the roots or at best the root of all other sciences. It is in this sense that Rene Descartes understands metaphysics. In “The Way Back to the Ground of Metaphysics”, Heidegger informs us that Descartes while writing to Picot (the translator of *Principia Philosophiae* into French) made the following observation:

Thus the whole of philosophy is like a tree: the roots are metaphysics, the trunk is physics, and the branches that issue from the trunk are all the other sciences (Heidegger, 1967: 433).

Kant’s understanding of metaphysics is not too different from that of Descartes. However, Kant was the first to make a clear demarcation between metaphysics as ontology and metaphysics as anthropology. In *The Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant outlined four senses of metaphysics thus: “(1) ontology; (2) rational physiology; (3) rational cosmology; (4) and rational theology” (1970: 662). His categorization of metaphysics into four stems from his initial distinction between transcendental metaphysics (as ontology) and physiological metaphysics (as anthropology).

Metaphysics, in the narrower meaning of the term, consists of *transcendental philosophy* and *physiology* of pure reason. The former treats only of the understanding and of reason, in a system of concepts and principles which relate to objects that *may be given (ontologia)*; the latter treats of nature, that is, of the sum of *given* objects (whether given to the senses, or, if we will, to some kind of intuition) and is therefore *physiology* – although only *rationalis* (Ibid).

The distinction between *understanding* and *rationalis* marks the difference between metaphysics as ontology (i.e. transcendental philosophy) and metaphysics as anthropology (i.e. physiology). In Kant’s view, transcendental philosophy concerns itself with the study of the structure of human consciousness which makes it possible for man to metaphysicize (i.e. to do metaphysics). Anthropology on the other hand deals with the study of nature and the so many *essents* (things) that constitute nature. Kant further explains that even that which has been designated

metaphysical anthropology is in a way transcendental. According to him, it is at this realm of metaphysics that distinction is made between physics as the study of nature and metaphysics as the study of that which goes beyond the physical.

The employment of reason in this rational study of nature is either physical or hyperphysical, or, in more adequate terms, is either *immanent* or *transcendent*. The former is concerned with such knowledge of nature as can be applied in experience (*in concreto*), the latter with the connection of objects of experience which transcends all experience (*Ibid.*).

By immanent or immanence Kant means things in physical experience. This realm of study according to him consists of *physics* or *rational physics* (i.e. the metaphysics of corporeal nature or simply, the metaphysics of nature) both of which come under *rational physiology*. *Rational physiology* in turn consists of *physica rationalis* (i.e. mathematics) which is distinct from the metaphysics of nature (i.e. physics or *physica generalis*) and *psychologia rationalis* (i.e. psychology). On the other hand, *transcendent physiology* has as its objects either an “inner” connection or an “outer” connection, both, however, transcending possible experience. As dealing with an inner connection it is the physiology of nature as a whole, that is, the *transcendental knowledge of the world* (rational cosmology); and as dealing with an outer connection, it is the physiology of the relation of nature as a whole to a being above nature, that is to say, it is the *transcendental knowledge of God* otherwise known as rational theology (*Ibid.* 662-63).

We can see from the above that Kant’s aim was not to define Being, but to answer that question “what is man”? It is Heidegger who took a bolder step towards the final accomplishment of the proper meaning and agenda of ontology. Heidegger agrees with Kant that metaphysics can be divided into two broad distinct parts, “(1) *metaphysica specialis*, which is concerned with the study of the particular spheres of essents, i.e. God, nature, and man etc, and (2) *metaphysica generalis*, the object of which is the study of the essent in general, that is to say, ontology” (Heidegger, 1959: 77). He however argues that Kant still saw metaphysics as mere “architectonics” or system building. Consequently, Heidegger had to design a plan totally different from Kant’s. Contrary to Kant, the objective of Heidegger was not to define man, but to answer the question “what is Being”? According to Heidegger, Being in the most ordinary sense means the ground of all things or the ground in which metaphysics as the study of reality (i.e. metaphysical anthropology) is rooted and also derives its nourishment. Having defined Being as the ground or foundation of all things, he goes ahead to define ontology as study of Being as Being (not as that or this particular being). Perhaps it is in this Heideggerian sense that J. I. Omoregbe regards “ontology as the core of metaphysics” (1999: xv). Perhaps, it is also in this sense that Pantaleon Iroegbu defines metaphysics as “the *kpim* of philosophy” (1995) and by *kpim* is meant essence, core or ground.

Recurrent Themes/Problems in Metaphysics

The discussion of the problems of metaphysical philosophy shall be done under two broad sub-headings which include: “ontological problems in metaphysics” and “anthropological problems

in metaphysics”. This is in consonance with our division of metaphysics into *metaphysica generalis* and *metaphysica specialis*.

A. Ontological Problems in Metaphysics: The problems discussed here include: Being, Being and non-Being, Human Being, Existence and Essence, and Transcendence and Immanence.

Problem of Being: Like Heidegger pointed out in *Being and Time*, in the history of Western philosophy, Being the most topical issue of metaphysics had for long remained in oblivion. So, he felt that this all important question about Being should be raise anew. Accordingly, he posed the question:

Do we in our time have an answer to the question of what we really mean by the word ‘being’? Not at all. So it is fitting that we should raise anew the question of the meaning of being.... Our aim in the following treatise is to work out the question of the meaning of being and to do so correctly (1962a: 1).

Though Heidegger did not succeed in capturing the meaning of Being in *Being and Time* and this is largely because the work remained unfinished. He rather succeeded in defining human being instead of Being. But in “The Way Back into the Ground of Metaphysics”, Heidegger refers to Being as “the light that gives sight to metaphysic or the light from which metaphysics derives its sight” (see Hartman, 1967: 433). As he states:

The truth of Being may thus be called the ground in which metaphysics, as the root of the tree of philosophy, is kept and from which it is nourished (Hartman, 433).

The Being that Heidegger speaks of is not any particular being, it is not this or that being. Unlike Aristotle, Augustine and Aquinas, by Being, Heidegger does not refer to God who incidentally is regarded as the being of beings. Heidegger is rather talking of a most primordial ground that sustains all other grounds, including God. Recall that Heidegger criticized Descartes for equating metaphysics with the roots of the tree, for referring to metaphysics as the science of the roots, the fall out of such criticism is to locate the ground from metaphysics takes its roots and also garners nourishment. The location of this ground from which metaphysics and every other thing derives source and garners nourishment is regarded by Heidegger to be the “overcoming of metaphysics” or in a more technical sense as Fundamental Ontology.

Problem of Being and Non-Being: Being has been identified by Heidegger as the ground of all things. Non-Being simply means nothing or nothingness. So when we talk about the problems of Being and non-Being, what we have in mind is to see whether there is a relationship between something and nothing. For instance, Leibniz, a German philosopher of the modern period asked the question: “Why is there something instead of nothing”? Of course as implied in Leibniz’s question, something is *prior* if not superior to nothing. Needless to say, this Leibnizan poser reenacts Aristotle’s old riddle: “The chicken and the egg which came first”? The tendency among Western philosophers is to apply the law of excluded middle in trying to solve these posers of Leibniz and Aristotle. Non-Being or nothingness was regard as a negation or a privation of

Being. In this manner of thinking therefore, nothing was regarded as “absence of everything including life, existence, and all discernible qualities; vacuum or space without nothing in it; complete worthlessness or insignificance” (*Encarta Dictionary*, 2008). It is along this line of thought that Parmenides asserts that Being is, while non-Being is not.

The above was the treatment of Being and non-Being among classical Western philosophers until Heidegger and Sartre. Recall that in *Being and Time* Heidegger could not conclude his research into Being. The real fact about the matter is that he spent the later part of his life searching for Being to no avail. But at least he discovered something in his search (note that no genuine philosophical quest is all together a waste). So Heidegger’s search led him to discover the elusiveness or the mysterious nature of Being. Being is the most elusive and mysterious concept, yet its pursuit is highly illuminating and rewarding. The illumination and reward here lies in the discovery that any forage into Being must necessarily land us into nothing or non-Being. Hence, any attempt to unearth the nature of something in totality, will inevitably land us in the realm of nothing. It then becomes the case that Being and non-Being are equi-primordial in the sense that they are both inseparable and inter-related. Thus, if Being is that which can be thought about, nothing or non-Being is the unthought of thought. Nothing is the foundation of all things. The entire universe floats on nothing and this explains why there can be no end to life or existence.

Being will always rise from nothing and collapse back into nothing. In the same vein, human thought rises from nothing, projects into nothing and relapses back into nothing. It is in this sense that Sartre says that: “emptiness lies coiled up like a worm in the heart of being” (1969: 21). By the expression emptiness Sartre means nothingness. From where does disease and the courses of disease arise and into what do they disappear upon healing if not nothingness? God came from nothing, Big Bang happened from nothing, nothing has always been there. Life rotates on nothing and so things rise from nothing and collapse back into nothing. And since nothing is coterminous with something, since non-Being and Being are equi-primordial, it follows that the watchword for us is the inexhaustibility of life. This is implied in the principle of electromagnetism, especially David Bohm’s “hollow movement theory”. Because inexhaustibility implies uncertainty, Heisenberg warns that the position and momentum of particles are indeterminate (see the law of indeterminacy in quantum mechanics).

Problem of Human Being: Man is a problem onto himself and so is the concept man a most intricate one. If you ask man about other things in the universe, he probably will give you a straight forward answer. But if you ask him about himself and his fellow humans, he might get intimidated. When therefore, we pose the question concerning human being, our essential interest is to unravel that essence that makes man a most complex being.

Religion presents man as a finished product whose maker had already fixed his (man’s) essence. But the anthropological studies of man began to reveal the contrary. In fact, anthropological studies reveal that man has inexhaustible attributes in the sense that man is capable of so many activities. This led to the re-examination of the nature of man. In Western philosophy, the first philosopher to make the analysis of that power which endows man with inexhaustible attributes his preoccupation is no other than Immanuel Kant. His fundamental objective was to investigate in metaphysical light the question: “What is man”? To answer this question appropriately, he

reframed it as follows: *what must I be in order to be a man?* The answer to the foregoing question is emphatic: *man is first and foremost a metaphysical being*. As a metaphysical being, man is a being of transcendence. This Kantian definition of man opened the way for the existentialist evaluation of man.

Existentialists are philosophers who make the investigation of human existence their preoccupation among whom are Martin Heidegger and Jean Paul Sartre. Heidegger for instance, explains that it is not possible to investigate Being without raising the question of human being. This is because man is the only being in the world who understands what it means to be and who also raises the question about Being. Man alone understands the relationship between Being and human being. Let's listen to Heidegger on this matter.

The very asking of this (i.e. the question about Being) is an entity's mode of being; and as such it gets to the essential character from what is inquired about, namely, being. This entity which each of us is himself and which includes inquiring as one of the possibilities of its being, we shall denote the term Dasein (1962a: 231).

Since for Heidegger man is the only being with a vague average understanding of Being, it follows that man is the being that *is there in the world*, he is "being there, *da-sein*" (Schacht, 1972: 59). Sartre agrees with Heidegger that man is not a finished product fixated to furnish only stereotyped projects for a supposedly divine lord of the universe. Since for Sartre, emptiness or nothingness constitutes the essence of man, it means that man is a being who is not what he is and who is what he is not. These Heideggerian and Sartrean existential analysis of man obviously contradicts the traditional notion of man which presents man as a mere design of God and whose interest alone man must serve.

The Problem of Existence and Essence: We consider this problem to be ontological because it is linked to the question problem of human being. Elsewhere, we defined the ontology of man simply as the metaphysics of man and by this is meant the exposition of those qualities which make man a rational being. Immanuel Kant figured this out in his book entitled: *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* when he wrote as follows:

The fact that man is aware of an ego-concept raises him infinitely above other creatures living on earth (1978: 9).

It is then of little surprise that Kant rejects the ontological arguments of St. Anselm and Rene Descartes on the ground that the ontological argument for the existence of God separated existence from essence. St. Anselm based his ontological argument on the greatness of God, while Descartes based his argument on the infinite perfection of God. The assumption then is that greatness and infinite perfection are necessary conditions for the existence of God. Kant rejects the ontological argument on the ground that existence is not an attribute to be added or separated from a being, just as it is impossible to separate the idea of three angles from a triangle or the idea of four equal angles from a square. Besides, it is possible to imagine the existence of a thing when in actual fact there is no such thing in existence. For instance, it possible to think of

a golden mountain or a unicorn (an imaginary creature of half-man and half-horse) without such thing being in existence. So what then is existence and how does it defer from essence?

The essence of a thing is said to be the stuff, substance, feature, attribute, quality, or the kernel of which that thing is made of. Because of the importance of understanding the essence of which things are made, traditional Western philosophers placed emphasis on essence over existence. Existential philosophers on their part think this traditional way of characterizing things is abnormal. They hold the contrary view that a thing must first exist before it can possess an essence. This latter assertion of the existentialist is in line with the thinking of Kant and Husserl. However, existentialists go one step further to state that the term existence can only be used for human beings. Hence by the word existence, existentialists actually mean human existence.

When existentialists speak of existence what they have in mind is – the ability for making both meaning and meaninglessness and since only man possesses this ability, they insist that man alone exists. Heidegger is very emphatic about this matter. As he declaratively states:

The being that exists is man. Man alone exists. Rocks are, but they do not exist. Trees are, but they do not exist. Horses are, but they do not exist. Angels are, but they do not exist, God is, but he does not exist (1967: 438).

He goes ahead to explain that:

The proposition “man alone exists” does not mean that man alone is a real being while all other beings are unreal and mere appearances or human ideas. The proposition “man exists” means: man is that being whose Being is distinguished by open-standing standing-in in the unconcealedness of Being, in Being (*Ibid.*).

To say that man alone exists simply means that man is the only one describing his own activities and the activities of other things (including God and Satan) in the universe in relation to man. It is interesting to note that before Heidegger, Karl Jaspers (German philosopher, one of the originators of existentialism, whose work influenced modern theology and psychiatry as well as philosophy) made distinction between *Existenz* and *Existentia*. *Existenz* is German word for existence and it is used by Jaspers to qualify human beings as entities with the boundless potentiality for meaning making. *Existentia* as used by Jaspers refers to other things in the universe which though are there but lack the capacity for meaning making. Jean Paul Sartre also toes the line of Jaspers. He makes distinction between conscious being (*etre pour-soi*) and unconscious being (*etre-on-soi*). Conscious being refers to “being-for-itself” and it portrays man as a being of transcendence who possesses the metaphysical ability to institute both meaning and meaninglessness. Man is thus a transcendent being through whom nothingness becomes manifest in the world. Hence, to be a being of transcendence, means to possess the power to bring about order as well as to reorder the nature of things and this entails a negation.

Human reality carries nothingness within itself. Man is the being through whom nothingness comes into the world. The being by whom nothingness comes into the world must be its own nothingness.... Man is always separated by nothingness

from his existence. The being by whom nothingness arrives in the world is a being such that in its being the nothingness of its being is in question (1969: 21, 23, 28, 35; cited by Omoregbe, 1999: 207)

On the other hand, unconscious being refers to “being-in-itself” or “being of pure positivity”. By implication, “being-in-itself” is not a transcendent being and hence, lacks the ability for ordering and reordering things. So it is just there in its positivity, in its state of synthesis. Unconscious being is pure: “Plenitude, compact density full of itself, it does not have nothingness or negation within its being, nor can it posit itself other than it is, it is what it is and is fully identical with itself, it has no reason for its being, it is just there, it has no ‘within’ which is opposed to a ‘without’” (Omoregbe, 1999: 207 – 208).

In existentialist terms therefore, unconscious being or the *existentia* cannot be said possess existence. Like Heidegger says, they (unconscious being or the *existentia*) are, but they do not exist. To exist is to possess the qualities for making meaning and meaninglessness and these include, temporality, facticity and existentiality. To exist is to possess the ability to perform those actions that can either be adjudged as authentic or inauthentic. To exist is to encounter the unfolding of life as dread and as anguish or anxiety (i.e. the dread of human finitude and the anguish or anxiety of the uncertainty of tomorrow). To exist is to be endowed with subjectivity (i.e. the autonomy of thought) from where derives the will power for deciding, for choice making and for commitment. To exist is to draw a plan and to work towards attaining this plan within a time frame. To exist is to perpetually strive towards freedom. It is in the bid to overcome vicissitudes that men aggregate into group existence in the form of society. This is why existentialists say that existence precedes essence, meaning that man first appears, experience the facticity of existence, and then begin to define his essence.

The Problem of Transcendence and Immanence: Traditionally, man is thought to be finite and for this reason he is immanent, while God is thought to be infinite and so is transcendent. But traditional philosophers also agree that human being is a combination of the finite and the infinite. The finite in this instance refers to the human body which portrays finitude and immanence. The infinite part of man is of course the human soul or spirit which they say is eternal hence, infinite and transcendent. This basically was the trend until the time of Kant. Thus from Kant onwards transcendence came to mean:

The beyondness of being made possible by the productive imagination. It is the act of projection beyond this being to that being in order to connect them into stable regularity or meaningful units. Transcendence is the act of forming relations or connectedness between beings to render them accessible. It is the finitude or native hunger in man which propels him to project from one state of affairs to another, from now to not now, from what is to what is not (Unah, 1997, 78).

Kant’s incursion into the question of transcendence stems from his attempt to rehabilitate metaphysics which was meant to evaluate the problems of “appearance and reality” in a new light. For him, traditional metaphysics commits the fallacy of *paralogism* (i.e. transcendental

illusion) and the way to dissolve such a monumental problem is to show the processes by which metaphysical probes become transcendental. He understands metaphysics to be the ability of finite reason to go beyond experience (the physical) into the supervoid. Making distinction between immanence and transcendence Kant states as follows:

We shall term those principles, the application of which is confined entirely within the limits of possible experience; Immanent, those on the other hand, which transgress these limits, we shall call Transcendent (1964: 209).

Thus, for Kant, that which is immanent is applicable to experience, that which is transcendent transgresses the bounds of experience. Transcendence then becomes a going beyond experience (i.e. the now or the physical) and it is through this act of beyondness that the world is always represented to us in a new light. This means that the whole of Kant's forage into human finitude (immanence) and infinitude (transcendence) ends up in metaphysical architectonics (i.e. the construction of a comprehensive metaphysical system). It also means that Kant's interest in exploring human transcendence does not include the purpose and end result of such an exercise. It is Heidegger who raised the question about the objective and end product of transcendence. He stresses this point rhetorically:

In this "creative" ontological knowledge is the essent "known", i.e. created as such? Absolutely not. Not only does ontological knowledge not create the essent, it does not even relate itself directly and thematically to the essent (Heidegger, 1962b: 125).

To what then does transcendence or ontological knowledge relate? Heidegger says it is to; "A Nothing". "That which Kant calls an X which speaks of an object" (*Ibid.*). By "transcendental object X" is meant the transcendental imagination which Heidegger considers to be the faculty of human transcendence. He devoted the book *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* to argue out this point.

In this sub-section we have taking time to examine what in Kantian and Heideggerian perspectives can be regarded as the ground of metaphysics. In line with Protagoras of Abdera who proclaims that – man is the measure of all things, Kant regards man as the source of metaphysics. The existentialists also think along this line of thought when they uphold that man alone exists. Heidegger makes a departure from this line of thinking. For him, more important than the being that does metaphysics in the ground of metaphysics which is Being. But whether we explore the ground of metaphysics which is Being or we explore the source of metaphysics which is human being, the point remains that metaphysics as ontological studies deals essentially with the ground, soil or foundation in which reality is rooted. We now turn to the treatment of the problems of metaphysical anthropology.

B. Problems of Anthropological Metaphysics: Simply, anthropological metaphysics is that branch of metaphysics whose principal concern is the cosmological study of the universe. The expression "cosmological study" accommodates both cosmology and cosmogony. It is exactly this branch of metaphysics that we refer to as *metaphysica specialis* or simply the specialized

sciences otherwise known as regional ontology. This is to say that other disciplines in the academics are in themselves specialized metaphysical (i.e. philosophical) systems in the sense that they deal with similar problems of philosophical (universal) metaphysics but from a specialized perspective. Essentially, the aim of anthropological metaphysics is to posit first principles or basic axioms for other disciplines. It is in this sense that Aristotle refers to metaphysics as first philosophy. It is also in this sense that metaphysics was fondly described by Descartes as the science of the roots and hence, the queen or king of all the sciences. It is in this sense that Alfred North Whitehead defines metaphysics as “the endeavour to frame a coherent, logical, necessary system of general ideas in terms of which every element of our experience can be interpreted” (1929:cited by Omoregbe, 1999: ix). Again, the definition of metaphysics as “the philosophical study whose object is to determine the real nature of things, to determine the meaning, structure and principles of whatever is insofar as it is” (*Encyc. Brit.* 1981, 10) also falls within this realm.

The recurrent themes treated in this sub-section include the problems of reality, nature of reality, appearance and reality, change and permanence, mind and body, space and time, causality, substance and accident, universals and particulars, freedom and determinism, unity and diversity, and identity and alienation.

The Problem of Reality: This is a simple way of asking the question: “What is reality”? To which answer(s) in the form of definition(s) should be provided. In the most ordinary sense reality (i.e. with small letter ‘r’) refers to thing or phenomenon, the plural form of which will be realities or things or phenomena. In that case, Reality (i.e. with capital letter ‘R’) would refer to the ‘totality of all that there is’ or ‘the sum total of everything that there is which lies in wait for investigation, to be brought to light, or made visible to the naked eyes’. Note that *is* happens to the preferential term here. When metaphysics is defined as the search for ultimate reality, *isness* of thing or things preoccupies the mind of the metaphysician. Another technical expression for *isness* is *to be* (i.e. the Greek *to on*), hence we also talk about *to beness* or simply *beness*. That something *is*, insofar as it influences human existence in whatever manner, remains *prior* to its attributes and functions. The nature of *isness* or *beness* therefore, is such that reality encompasses the totality of human experience be it real or imaginary, tangible or intangible, material or immaterial, corporeal or incorporeal, visible or invisible, factual, fictional or mere illusion etc, all constitute the realm of reality. This is why the treatment of metaphysical problems touches on every aspect of human experience. It also explains why metaphysical systems offer a comprehensive account of reality. We can then say that metaphysics as a system is a holistic or totalizing appraisal of reality.

Problem of the Nature of Reality: This border on the human description of reality. It is about the human idea or notion of reality. The goal here is to describe the nature, attribute or the essential character of reality, a task that is technically referred to as “the naming of the world”. It is here that man shows his genius by merging thought and language to describe the world or give names to things in the world. In doing this some fundamental problems arise and this concerns the question whether reality is physical or non-physical. Philosophers who say that reality is material are called materialists and those philosophers who say that reality is non-physical are known as idealists. Thus, materialism and immaterialism (i.e. idealism) become ways of

describing reality. Materialists belong in the school of materialism and they espouse the view that the real is the material or the physical and in this case they have in mind matter. Idealists or immaterialists are those who belong in the school of idealism and they maintain that ideal or immaterial is the real and by this they mean mind, idea, reason, spirit, soul or form. Because materialists and idealists hold opposing views about reality we say that they are rival schools of thought. And because each doggedly hold onto a one sided or a mono view of reality we say that materialism and idealism are monistic metaphysical systems.

There are also philosophers who argue that both the corporeal and the incorporeal constitute reality. This latter group of philosophers hold a dualistic view about reality so they are called dualists and their school of thought is known as dualism. There is however a main difference between dualism and duality. According to *Microsoft Encarta* (2008) “dualism, in philosophy, is the theory that the universe is explicable only as a whole composed of two distinct and mutually irreducible elements”. It also defines duality as “a situation or nature that has two states or parts that are complementary or are in mutual opposition”. Whereas dualism connotes contrast, opposition, polarity, dichotomy and differentiation, duality would connote complementarity, mutuality, symbiosis and coexistence. Whereas dualism allows for the bifurcation of things into compartments, duality on the other hand abhors bifurcation and compartmentalization. Consequently, even when dualism recognizes two distinct existent things, because it always polarizes and dichotomizes things, this duality soon shrinks or reduces to become a monistic dualism. In essence, though dualism offers us the opportunity of a dual world of good and evil, heaven and hell, faith and reason etc, but because of its tendency to polarize, conjunction is soon replaced by disjunction (i.e. the excluded middle) so that at the end we are left to choose either good or bad, heaven or hell, faith or reason. In science this spirit of polarization rears its head up in the form of proving whether a given statement is true or false. This is exactly what we mean by the law of exclusivity or reductionism.

It is clear from the foregoing that classical Western metaphysics (and by implication classical Western philosophy in general) is essentially monistic, reductionistic and exclusive in character. In classical Western epistemology, dualism further creates the problems of psychologism in rationalism and phenomenalism in empiricism. In psychologism apart from maintaining that reason is endowed with innate contents or ideas, there is the dogged insistence on the superiority of rational knowledge over sense knowledge and hence a deliberate discrimination against sense knowledge. Phenomenalism in empiricism is the exact opposite of psychologism in rationalism. Kant and Husserl battled with these problems with little success. It took the concerted efforts of existential phenomenologists and postmodernists alike to substantially combat the problems of psychologism and phenomenalism in Western epistemology and the problem of dualism in Western metaphysics.

The African thought system (be it in the area of metaphysics, epistemology, ethics or logic) operates on the law of duality, not dualism. We had earlier described the African metaphysical system as integrative on the ground that its dualistic nature allows for a plurality of views. We also said that this integrative metaphysics bears similar if not the same characteristics as Heidegger’s hermeneutic phenomenology. What this boils down to is that integrative metaphysics and hermeneutic phenomenology offer a third option on how to apprehend reality.

This third option is of course pluralism, which is distinct from monism/reductionism and dualism.

Problem of Appearance and Reality: The common practice among the ancients was to regard that which is rational and intangible as superior to that which is sensual and tangible. In the same vein, the ancients concluded that since thought precedes action, it means that the immaterial has pre-eminence over and above the material. This gave rise to the “two realm cosmology” (i.e. monistic dualism) very much evident in the Parmenidean metaphysics. The vogue of any “two realm cosmology,” such as that of Parmenides and Plato, is to place preference upon reason above sense perception. Reason is equated with intelligibility, intangibility, indivisibility, indestructibility and originality. The perceptible world, on the other hand, is conceived as being tangible, divisible, material, destructible and illusory. The contrast between these substances with opposite attributes gave rise to the demarcation between “reality and appearance”. This was the common line of thinking among the Greeks. But the Greeks are not alone in this line of thinking. Traditional Africans also conceived phenomenon in a cosmological double of “spirit force” and a “material essence”. Kenneth C. Anyanwu makes this point clear when he states as follows:

When the African looks at a tree within the assumptions of his culture, he sees and imagines a life-force interacting with another life-force. He sees the colour of the object (tree), feels its beauty, imagines the life-force in it, intuitively grasps the interrelationships between the hierarchy of life-forces. If he did not do this, he would not have concluded that spirit exists in the world. He does not see spirit with his eyes nor is it a rationally and theoretically postulated concept like atoms and electrons (Anyanwu, 1981: 95).

It is instructive from the above that it is common among traditional peoples (Greeks or Africans) to conceive of reality in terms of a cosmological double. However, contrary to the Greeks, Africans do not conceive the duality of spirit (i.e. ideas or reason) and matter as monistic or exclusive. For Africans, spirit and matter operate the law of inclusivity, of symbiosis, and of interpenetrability.

Within the materialist tradition of Western philosophy, phenomena are seen as the physical objects and the physical (cosmic) forces or laws that govern the universe. The enterprise of seeking for an ethereal double behind the physical universe is a craze of idealist philosophers. For all idealist philosophers, including transcendental philosophers such as Immanuel Kant, “real reality” is *logos* or *reason*. Phenomena are used to depict mere appearances or illusions. In Parmenidean cosmology for instance, reality is Being, non-Being is appearance. In Platonism, real reality are the *eidos*, the physical universe is an ephemeral copy of the *eidos*. In that logical order Kant insists that what we are capable of knowing are appearances, we cannot apprehend *noumena*. Hegel reverses the order of Kant. For him (Hegel) real reality is the Absolute Spirit, the physical universe is a manifestation of the Absolute. Marx and the Marxists reject this idealist account and go ahead to insist that real reality is the physical universe. According to V.I Lenin:

Phenomena are the things – in – themselves. There is no realm of the unknown or unknowable. Phenomena simply consist of the known and the yet to be known (cited by Kuznetsov, 1984: 74).

It took the intervention of Heidegger to sort out the divergence of views about reality and appearance among Western philosophers. To get to the ground of the term phenomenon Heidegger goes back to the early period of the Greeks. His discovery is amazing. For the early Greeks *a-letheia* is the word used in depicting phenomena and it meant “the unconcealedness of what-is-present, its being revealed, its showing itself” (Unah, 1998: 310). According to Michael Murray, “unconcealedness suggests that truth happens in a context with concealment, with hiddenness; this hiddenness of Being is something fertile and positive, as expressed in the aphorism of Heraclitus that *physis* loves to hide” (1988: 514). Thus, Heidegger radicalizes the meaning of phenomenon. He began by explaining the difference between the *manifold* and *manifest* essences of a being. As unconcealedness, a being shows itself in the positive sense as *manifest* and as *manifest*, a being “shows itself as itself, it reveals itself in the light of day, but whether as *semblance* or as *manifest*, phenomenon remains essentially *manifold*, that is, we grant that ‘what is’ reveals itself only in profiles or aspects, in bits and pieces” (1962a: 51). In other words, the problem with classical Western philosophers is that they had a polarized understanding of reality and since reality has been polarized the tendency is to regard an aspect of reality to be real, while the other aspect is either illusory or a mere appearance. When looked at from perspective of integrative metaphysics or hermeneutic phenomenology, we reach the understanding that there is unity in diversity (i.e. the one in the many) and vice versa. Thus as unity or one reality is manifest and as many or diverse reality is manifold, multi-faceted and multi-dimensional. However, we are only able to apprehend only aspects of reality at a time (i.e. applying Heisenberg’s theory of indeterminacy, we are never able to apprehend totality at once).

Problem of Change and Permanence: The problem of change and permanence is connected to the problem of Being and non-Being. It is actually by the intermingling Being and non-Being that Becoming (i.e. change) becomes manifest. The common convention is to regard Being as permanence, indivisibility, indestructibility, immortality, one, eternal and unchanging. Becoming is quite the opposite of Being.

According to David Lindberg the discourse on change was the dominant issue among the Greek philosophers of the 5th century BC. By way of reiteration, George James states that the discourse on change among ancient Greek philosophers actually started with Pythagoras, not Parmenides. He explains that Pythagoras was well acquainted with the Egyptian doctrine of the generation of things through primordial principles of formation that occur in the form of opposites and contraries. As he states, “Pythagoreans expressed it (the doctrine of opposites) by the elements of number: odd and even” (1988: 74). Most probably, it is based on his knowledge of generation of things through opposites and contraries that Pythagoras himself explains that “fire underlies creation” (p. 71). James further explains that this law of generation through opposites and contraries was well known to all Greek philosophers of the 5th century BC who had direct contact with either Pythagoras or Pythagoreans, except Parmenides. Being unfamiliar with the law of generation “Parmenides denied the existence of one opposite (not-Being), in order to affirm the existence of the other” (Being) (p. 74). We then notice that in Parmenides’ philosophy,

the absence of the discourse on opposites and contraries, which is quite prominent in the philosophies of Greek philosophers of that period, is quite obvious.

Parmenides (540 - 450 BC) was born in the Greek city state of Elea in Southern Italy. He composed a poem on nature: *Peri Physeos* which contains his thoughts. The poem is said to consist of three parts, but it is the first two parts that deal with his view on the illusion of change. In the part one the Goddess of truth enlightens us to the fact that there are two paths to knowledge which are the paths to truth (i.e. path of reason) and the opinion of men, which Lindberg describes “the way of seeming which is associated with observation” (1992: 33). Right reason as the path of truth affirms the oneness and immutability of Being, but the senses and common opinion (*doxa*) are convinced that plurality and change exist. In part two we are told that truth consists in the knowledge that Being (*To on*) is, while non-Being (*To me on*) is not. Since non-Being is not, it follows that Being is one and alone. Therefore: “Being is unproduced and unchanging. It is impossible for Being to produce Being; for under such circumstance Being must exist before it begins to exist” (James, 60).

Heraclitus (530 – 470 BC), a native of Ephesus in Asia Minor held opposing view to Parmenides. Contrary to Parmenides who doggedly refuted the existence of contraries and opposites, Heraclitus held that opposites and contraries propel and sustain the universe, that for this reason the universe is in a perpetual state of Becoming, in eternal state of flux. Hence, “There is no static Being, no unchanging element. Change is Lord of the universe. The underlying element being fire, all things are changed for fire and fire for all things” (*Ibid.* 62). The change caused by fire is not random but uniform, orderly and cyclic because “the heavenly fires transmuted successively into vapor, water and earth; only to go through a similar process as they ascend again into fire” (pp. 62 – 63). This uniform, orderly and cyclic mutation of things is made possible by the “hidden harmony in nature which forever reproduces concord from oppositions, the divine law (*dike*) or universal reason (*Logos*) rules all things, reproduces itself in all things and restores all things according to fixed laws” (p. 63).

It is then evident why Heraclitus held that no one can step into the same water twice for fresh waters are always flowing. Needless to say, the thinking of Heraclitus that the *Logos* substance that regulates change must be non-physical corroborates Anaximander’s earlier thinking that “change destroys matter and unless the substratum of change is limitless, change must at some point cease” (p. 56).

Between Parmenides and Heraclitus then ensued the problem of dualism in Greek philosophy. In Plato for instance, dualism consists of the divide between the world of forms (the *eidos*) which is assumed to be immutable and the ephemeral world of things which of course is mutable. The question then arose about which of the two; change or permanence, is the dominant feature of the universe. Democritus attempts a resolution of this puzzle when he wrote that: “Reality by the life of the atom is a movement of **that which is** (*To on*) within **that which is not** (*To me on*)” (James, 75). Democritus shows that permanence and change are both features of the world. The puzzle is however more comprehensively resolved by Aristotle.

In Plato the theory the form is other-worldly, Aristotle’s theory of form is this-worldly. Again, in Plato change occurs due to imperfection in the materials the *Demiurge* uses in forging things of

the world. In place of this, Aristotle developed his theory of hylomorphism (i.e. theory of matter and form) which states that material things have the potentiality to transform from one state to another. But this transformation is made possible by form (mind) which acts upon matter – hence there is a movement from potentiality to actuality. In the first place, “all change and motion in the universe can be traced back to the nature of things” (Lindberg, 52). So, by its nature, matter has the potency to undergo change at three levels of “(1) non-being (2) potential being and (3) actual being” (pp. 51 – 52).

To illustrate; hot or dry (an assumed state of privation or the beingness of hotness or dryness) can transmute into cold or wet (i.e. negation as non-being) and vice versa. At a second level, potential being can transmute into actual being. This happens when for example a seed displays its potentiality by transforming into actual tree. This implies that the seed is encoded with form (i.e. DNA) which determines its development into actual tree and is known in genetic engineering as morphogenesis. At third level and ultimately, Aristotle argued that “all change and motion in the universe can be traced back to the natures (i.e. the beings) of things” (p. 52). Lindberg however, warns that this third level of change will apply to only natural things, not things artificial. But all these dynamisms of change would remain impossible if there is no force (mind) to cause matter to transform. It is at this point that we enter into Aristotle’s four notions of cause. These include “(a) formal cause (b) material cause (c) efficient cause and (d) final cause which correspond to (a) the form received by a thing (b) the matter underlying that form which persists through change (c) the agency that brings about the change and (d) the purpose (i.e. goal or telos) served by the change” (p. 53).

All the while it is mind that is acting on matter. Thus at the stage of formal cause, mind imposes form (idea) upon matter, at the stage of material cause matter receives definite shape, size and weight, at the stage of efficient cause the agency acting all the while (i.e. sculptor or potter) now begins to shape matter into the already conceived form or idea, and at the stage of final cause matter as a finished product now serves purposes which could be commercial, spiritual, intellectual, economic, political, ornamental, cultural and so on. We therefore notice in Aristotle the dynamisms of change and permanence. The assumption is that “motion and rest are attributes of nature” (James, 70), a doctrine that is aptly represented in the theories of the Unmoved Mover and the Uncaused Cause.

We notice in Aristotle’s hylomorphism theory the presence of the doctrine of dualism. In dualism, opposites and contraries are seen to be in conflict or in antagonistic relationship. In other words, Aristotle’s theory of hylomorphism does not demonstrate enough that form and matter are symbiotic, mutual and complementary. It rather shows that form (mind) has features that are antithetical and superior to matter, making form to superimpose upon matter.

The discourse on permanence and change later gave rise to the principles of dialectics and hermeneutic phenomenology in the philosophies of George Hegel, Karl Marx and Martin Heidegger. Dialectics is the logic or law of change in history, while hermeneutics is the logic of discourse that leads to interpretations achieved through deconstruction. Hegel used dialectics to reflect on historical change. Marx used the same principle to discuss change in social consciousness. Whereas Hegel’s reflection on change in history follows the directives of Spirit or

Reason, Marx's discussion of change in social consciousness follows the directives of matter. Hegel's discourse on change is therefore known as dialectical and historical idealism, Marx's delineation of change on the other hand is called dialectical and historical materialism. The problem with dialectical treatment of change is that it gives the impression that change as becoming happens due to the antagonism of Being and non-Being. This is very clear in Hegel's dialectics where Being is presented as position or thesis, non-Being is presented as opposition, antithesis or negation, Becoming is presented as synthesis or reconciliation. This antagonistic relationship between Being and non-Being that results into Becoming continues ad infinitum.

In social relations, the danger with this manner of thinking is that it creates the impression that war (conflict) is the only factor for change, meaning that there are no disagreements in peace times so peace cannot generate change. Heidegger's hermeneutic phenomenology reverses this impression by opening us up to the realization that Being and non-Being, in the first place, are not in antagonistic affinity, rather, both are mutually predisposed (i.e. equi-primordial) in complementarity. What this means is that change is a natural process of the universe and the human society and it happens whether in times of war or peace. There is conflict in agreement; there is also conflict in disagreement. It is a question of the maturity and ingenuity we put into issues and situations. Hence, by the hermeneutic order, permanence and change are both features of the universe. We cannot speak of perpetual permanence or perpetual change for that would result into a unidirectional universe. A universe system sustained by permanence and change is cyclical in orientation, meaning that permanence and change are in mutual cooperation.

Mind/Body Problem: Rene Descartes the French philosopher is the one who brought this problem into the open. The problem actually started when Descartes was trying to refute the claim that the soul died with the body. This particular exercise came as a result of the papal call which challenged Christian philosophers to reply skeptics who argued that the soul is not immortal. In Western philosophy the doctrine of the immortality of the soul dates back to Pythagoras and Plato. Descartes like Pythagoras and Plato belongs to the dualist school of thought. As it relates to the mind/body problem dualism maintains that man is a combination of mind and body. This used to be the basic assumption. But before Descartes, no one bothered to ask how two parts of the human entity that are distinct inter-relate. Descartes made it his point of duty to bring this distinction between mind and body into the open. He argues that mind is non-spatial (i.e. does not occupy space), non-extended, has no weight, shape, size, no density. The body as matter is the complete opposite of mind. How then do two things of different attributes relate? How is it that mental activities influence physical activities and vice versa? Descartes replies that they actually interact and that they do so at the point of the pineal gland which according to him is located between the spinal cord and the brain.

This Cartesian doctrine is known as *interactionism*. The problem with this theory is that it does not sufficiently explain how two things of different features interact (if at all they interact). Besides, the pineal gland is sandwiched between the cerebrum and cerebellum halves of the brain, it is nowhere near the atlas vertebral bone which is the point where the spinal cord joins the brain. Descartes can be pardoned for this mistake because in his time, neurology had not fully evolved as a medical science. This apart, implied in Descartes theory of *interactionism* is the

tendency to regard the brain as the mind or at least the seat of the mind. If this is so then it contradicts Descartes' earlier assertion that the mind is intangible and immaterial.

Geulinx and Nicholas Malebranche, Descartes' followers, disagreed with Descartes. These two argue that mind and body do not interact, rather, God is the link between mind and body. On the occasion that I decide in my mind to stand, to eat or not to buy a car any more, God will intervene and move my body to respond to my mental activity (i.e. the decision I made), and vice versa. This doctrine of Geulinx and Malebranche is called the theory of *occasionalism*. It is a laughable doctrine in that it involves God in the intricate matters of the mind and as such denies man of his subjectivity which dowers us with the autonomy of thought. If indeed, God is the go between mind/body, it would mean that he is privy to every intention of man be such intention good or evil. Then if on the occasion of my deciding to commit acts that are heinous and criminal, God intervenes and moves my body to commit such, is he not as guilty as me in committing such obnoxious acts? The only unfortunate thing in this instance is that should I be apprehended and executed God as spirit would be at large. And should on another occasion of someone slashing a very sharp cutlass on the neck of a neighbor, God also allows such physical act to result to the departure of the soul from the body (death), would God be said to be free of murder in this instance? Again as spirit he remains at large.

Obviously, Geulinx and Malebranche did not know the full implications of their doctrine. For inasmuch as we applaud God for all acts noble and good, he cannot be extricated as well from all acts ignoble and evil. Next comes Leibniz with his theory of *pre-established harmony*. The theory states that like the maker of several clocks has set the clocks in such order that all of them simultaneously and harmoniously strike the same time always and with precision, so has God pre-established a harmony between mind and body such that mental acts simultaneously affect physical acts and vice versa. This means that mind and body do not interact, there only happens to be mutual agreement between them by a pre-established harmony. Kant dismissed this theory of Leibniz simply as *dues ex machina*, that is to say – no explanation. Just like the theory of *occasionalism*, this doctrine of Leibniz infringes seriously on human freedom.

Spinoza does not see the mind/body relation as a problem. He assumes that mind and body are two parallel aspects of the same substance. This theory of Spinoza is known as *parallelism* or *double aspect theory*. In reality there is only one substance but this substance has two aspects; *God or Nature, mind or body, spirit or matter*. Like the two sides of a coin, mind and body do not meet, they do not interact, but whatever happens to one side (i.e. of the coin) will expectedly and automatically affect the other (a bad coin is a bad coin whether it is the head or tail that is affected). So for Spinoza God neither intervenes or interferes in the mind/body correlation nor is there a pre-established harmony responsible for such mental/physical affinity, rather, mind and body happen to be parallel or double aspects of the same reality. There is a basic problem with this Spinozan theory and this concerns the question of the elusiveness of the substance with two parallel aspects.

Implied in the dualist account of the mind/body problem is an idealistic theory of mind which states that mind is mental and immaterial, and perhaps, its existence is superior to that of matter. The doctrine that mind is mental and immaterial is known as the substance theory of mind.

Opposed to this idealist theory is David Hume's materialist account of mind known as serial or bundle theory of mind. Hume argues that whenever he enters into what is fondly called mind he does not encounter any substance called mind except series or bundle of impressions. This position of Hume seems to have set the stage for other materialist account of mind/body problem which include *identity theory* and *epiphenomenalism*. *Identity theorists* such as Armstrong and Smart argue that there is no such thing as mind, if at all there is, it is not different from the brain. Mind in this wise is either a category mistake or simply a second order function of matter. *Epiphenomenalists* such as Gilbert Ryle then go ahead to declare that what we call mind is a secondary product of the brain, like the smoke or faggot given off by burning wood. Gilbert Ryle then concludes that looking for a mind in a body is like looking for a ghost in the machine.

From the idealist or materialist perspective, it would then seem that mind is either spiritual or physical. If this is the case then there will be no problem of correlation, since impliedly, man is either spiritual or physical. Problem however arises when the mind/body question is looked at from a dualist perspective. An adequate account of how the correlation between two dissimilar things happens has not been provided. A transcendentalist theory of mind such as that of Kant will seem to take care of this problem. Kant identified three basic faculties of the mind which are sensibility, imagination and the apperception also known as the understanding or thought. Sensibility is a function of the human body and its significance lies in gathering information about the world through the five senses. The information gathered by the senses is then stored in the memory which functions include receiving, storing, associating and recalling information.

The imagination functions as the faculty of image formation and as such it is the faculty of synthesis. This makes the imagination to be the faculty of vision as well. Thought is the faculty of concept formation and the function of concepts is to provide rules (i.e. schema) for directing the entire affairs of the mind. This Kantian account of the mind/body problem seems to suggest that mind is the total functioning of the human entity. It seems to uphold the point that mind is at once physical, mental as well as spiritual. It can also be described as a unitary concept of mind in the sense that it takes mind to be the power to form unity and as a power responsible for forming unity, mind in itself has to function as a unit.

Space/Time Problem: What is space? What is time? The answers we give to the foregoing questions will determine how we organize our daily activities. Space and time are very practical and pragmatic issues. Both are tied to activity, to development and to progress. On a second thought, it would appear that separating space from time is abnormal because they both seem to be one sequence of event. Hence, we speak of space/time dimension, not about space and time. However, for didactic reasons we shall look at the two as separate but connected problems

The space/time problem can be looked at from two perspectives which are: the subjective and the objective. From the subjective perspective we examine how the human mind comes to cognize space and time. From the objective perspective we look at space and time as events outside the human mind. But both perspectives are related because without the power to cognize space/time, it will be difficult for us to understand space and time either as physical or as mental event. It is largely because we understand space and time as concepts that we are able to build activities round them. We now examine Kant and Einstein's views on space and time.

According to Kant the faculty of the mind responsible for the perception of the phenomenal world is no other than sensibility or the faculty of intuition. Sensibility is the faculty that depicts man's dependence on the five senses whose function is to provide us with immediate (i.e. *a posteriori*) knowledge of things. But the perception of the phenomenal world will not be possible without the two categories of sensibility which are *space* and *time*. Kant classifies *space* as the *outer sense*, and by this he means that space is the mental construct that endows us with the ability to be aware of an open (objective) expanse outside of us. The open expanse in itself is same as the phenomenal world which beckons on us for inspection. The ability to inspect and comprehend this open expanse constitutes the realm of what we call space. He also describes *time* as the *inner sense* and by this he means the mental construct which endows us with the ability to perceive momentum or succession (i.e. sequence) of events as well as the ability to be aware of and to actually serialize the events that happened in the open sphere. Thus, sensibility depicts the power of the human mind to empirically or physically represent objects or events of the world to itself in space and in time. Thus for Kant space and time are empirical concepts of the mind used in organizing events of the world.

The objective appraisal of space and time is done by Albert Einstein and this is found in his theory of relativity. The theory is actually an improvement on Max Planck's mechanics (i.e. physics). Planck argued that "the properties of space are fixed by the masses of bodies in a gravitational field expressed in the formula Mc^2 " (Nkrumah, 1978: 88). Planck's physics is an improvement on Newton's mechanics, while Einstein's relativity theory outlines the pitfalls in Newtonian mechanics and Planck's physics. Newton was unable to resolve the problems of motion and time. He thought that there must be a realm of the absolute which should be responsible for events that happen in the relative realm. So, absolute space, place and time determine occurrences in relative space, place and time. What Newton seems to be saying is that there is an unmoved realm which is responsible for occurrences in the movable realm. If we go by this theory of Newton we would never be able to build vehicles that are moved or driven from the inside, the best such theory can afford us is to build carts or chariots that are drawn by horses or oxen. Planck on his part only talked about mass (i.e. M) and velocity (i.e. c^2), he missed out energy which is the actual factor that propels mass into motion or velocity.

To make up for the gaps in Newton mechanics and Planck's physics, Einstein brought in the theory of relativism and the principle of the conservation of energy. The former rejects in totality the doctrine of absolute realm and replaces it with relativism pure and entire. The latter makes improvement on Planck's mechanics. The conservation of energy theory states that energy is always constant in a conservative principle. A conservative principle is a body (organic or inorganic) in which energy is relatively constant and cannot be extinguished. The amount of energy expended always equal the amount received. Thus given an expanse called space, a body with energy (i.e. kinetic energy) will voluntarily move. As the body moves in available space, it gathers momentum and duration. Space is the expanse in which motion takes place, the momentum and duration gathered equals time. But time will not be possible without energy (e) inside a mass (m) which then propels the mass or body into motion or velocity (c^2), hence the formula $E = mc^2$.

Problem of Causality: As Russell points out; “in the Cartesian philosophy, as in the case of the Scholastics, the connection of cause and effect was supposed to be necessary, as logical connections are necessary” (1972: 664). Hume made a sharp departure from this traditional understanding of causality. He posits a new idea of causality that signaled the modern notion of causation. In actual fact, the challenge before him was to theorize about a notion of causality that would be relevant to science. Thus in Book 1, Part III, Section II of the *Treatise of Human Nature*, he asserts that there are four relations which are the foundation of science and these are; *probability, identity, the situation in time and place*, that is, *contiguity and succession* also known as *the law of reciprocity* and *causation*. For instance, the law of probability operates on the assumption that the future will always resemble the past, the law of identity assumes that nature is uniform, the law of contiguity or reciprocity assumes that there is a necessary connection between two events which follow each other, that is, based on (1) and (2), while by the law of causation we infer that the repeated occurrence of events is enough to justify their continued occurrence in the future. Of the four relations that form the foundation of science, it is causality that impresses on us the idea of a necessary connection of events. Hume explains:

‘Tis only *causation*, which produces such a connexion, as to give us assurance from the existence or action of one object, that ‘twas followed or preceded by any other existence or action (p. 121).

Hume then proceeds to examine how in the first instance we are able to reach the idea of a connection between events, that is to say, the general assumption commonly made in philosophy that “*whatever begins to exist, must have a cause of existence*” (p.127). Thus, contrary to the view of continental idealists and the scholastics, Hume’s aim on this matter is to prove: “How knowledge of real existence can be reached by pure reason alone” (Weldon, 1968: 39).

The common assumption in traditional logic is that the causal link between an antecedent (i.e. ground for an) event and a consequent event can be rationally deduced. Hume disagreed with this notion in traditional logic. He proceeded to demonstrate that: “The power by which one object produces another is not discoverable from the ideas of the two objects; therefore, we can only know cause and effect from experience, not from reasoning or reflection” (Russell, 1972: 664). Thus for Hume, the thinking or statement that; *every object which begins to exist, must owe its existence to a cause*, is one that is “neither intuitively nor demonstratively certain” (Weldon, 1968: 129).

If we agree with Hume that it is neither from knowledge nor any scientific reasoning that we derive the idea of the necessity of a cause, but that such a notion arises from observation and experience, the question that follows concerns *how experience gives rise to such a principle* (p. 130). Hume’s answer to this question is to postulate that by observation and experience we perceive *constant conjunction* and that it is by this constant conjunction that we infer event (object) A from event (object) B. According to Russell, Hume’s usage of the word *infer* is never in the traditional sense of logic where we talk of formal or explicit inference, rather, what Hume simply meant by this word is that the *perceiving of event A makes us to expect event B* (Russell, 1972: 665). What Hume meant to say in effect is that our perception of causality or necessary connection is out of belief, habit or custom. He defined belief as “a lively idea related to or

associated with a present event” (Weldon, 130). In other words, our idea of necessity or causality is custom determined which then creates the impression or the belief that event A caused event B. We can therefore say that for Hume this habitual way of believing in causality derives from the power of the memory to associate impressions into ideas. We can then conclude that in the view of Hume, the idea of causality or “necessity is something that exists in the mind, not in objects” (Russell, 666).

Because Hume relied on the method of empiricism (as opposed to rationalism), he could not see how sensibility can apprehend causality and so he logically concluded that there is no such thing as causality in experience. Based on this denial, Immanuel Kant was challenged to embark on an ontological examination of causality all with the sole aim of proving that we neither believe in causality out of habit nor out of expectation, rather, by inference, we think in terms of causal connections and by so doing instruct causality into nature. The delineation of how the human mind thinks causally (inferentially) and then proceeds to impose causality upon the world happens to be a cardinal thesis of *The Critique of Pure Reason*.

Problem of Freedom and Determinism: Is man a free being or is he determined? If he is determined can it be said that he is responsible for his actions? Again, if man is determined how come he is rewarded or punished for his actions? And if man is free to what extent is he responsible for his actions? These are questions central to the problem of freedom and determinism. Those philosophers who say that man is determined are called determinists and those of them who argue that man is free are referred to as libertarians.

There are several dimensions to the determinism theory. We have ethical determinism, theological determinism, physical determinism, psychological determinism, metaphysical determinism, historical determinism, and social and economic determinism. Ethical determinism argues that man is compelled by the idea of the good to do the good. Prominent in this line of thought are Socrates and Plato who jointly espouse the view that ignorance is the reason for evil doing. Theological determinism derives from the attributes of God as the all powerful, all knowing and all present. Implied in these attributes is the issue of foreknowledge of all actions. If this is so, is it still normal to blame humans for actions that are adjudged to be evil? Physical determinism is the view that man as a member of physical nature is determined by the laws of nature and is therefore, not free. This view is largely upheld by materialists such as Democritus and Epicurus the atomists, and Thomas Hobbes, La Mettrie and Baron Paul Von Holbach the nature philosophers. Psychological determinism is the view that human actions are determined by psychological factors such as instincts and motives.

The theory of instincts is upheld by Sigmund Freud the psychoanalyst, while the doctrine of motives is propagated by Hobbes and Hume. Metaphysical determinism derives from George Hegel’s theory of the Absolute Spirit who uses human characters such as the hero to accomplish his set objectives in history. Hence, connected to metaphysical determinism is historical determinism. Since men, whether as heroes, masters, citizens or victims are all manipulated by the Absolute Spirit, it means that human metaphysical and historical actions are determined. Social and economic determinism derive from Karl Marx’s thesis that – social consciousness

determine individual consciousness. By implication, individuals are at the mercy of the social and economic policies of the leaders of the society.

The school of thought of those determinists who do not deny moral responsibility is called “soft determinism”, while the school of thought of those determinists who completely deny moral responsibility is called “hard determinism”. Hobbes, Hume and J. S. Mill belong in the school of soft determinism. Baron Paul Von Holbach is a hard determinist. One thinks that hard determinism is a more logical way of concluding the debate on determinism. However, soft determinism paves the way for the libertarians to argue for human freedom. Libertarians such as Nietzsche and Sartre vehemently argue that man is a free being. In order that man should be free without hindrance or external interference, Nietzsche declared the death of God. The death of God should lead man to the realization that he is beyond good and evil, that he is beyond the slave morality of religion.

This realization should open man up to a new dawn, the dawn of the superman morality governed by the new principles of noble and ignoble. Sartre agrees with Nietzsche that man is a free being. In the case of Sartre however, God does not need to die for man to be free, he simply does not exist. For man to be completely free, God has to cease to be in existence. But the non-existence of God puts on man a heavy responsibility. So the prize of freedom is that man should be responsible for his actions. And if freedom goes with responsibility it means that man must be ready to bear the consequences of his actions. Sartre like other existentialists does not speak of good or bad actions, but of authentic or inauthentic actions. Authentically we seize upon our circumstance of freedom by making bold decisions and choices. Inauthentically, we forfeit our freedom to make decisions and choices. But the decision not to decide is indeed a decision and the choice not to choose is a choice. For when we refuse to decide or make a choice, we have unwittingly decided or unknowingly chosen. The debate on freedom and determinism is unending. Like Kant said, this problem is not one that can be resolved metaphysically. It is more of a moral issue that appeals to our conscience.

Other recurrent problems in metaphysics include substance and accident, universals and particulars, unity and diversity, and identity and alienation. The problem of substance and accident is connected to that of appearance and reality. The word: “Substance comes from the Latin *sub* meaning under and *stans* meaning standing. Thus the word literally means ‘standing under’ or ‘that which stands under’” (Omogegbe, 1999: 5). Substance has been variously used to mean stuff, basic stuff, essence, kernel, solidity, or in Cartesian parlance, an independent existent. This means that substance can be material or immaterial depending on the school of thought of the philosopher. Accident is opposite of substance. Accident is that which cannot exist on its own but needs to be supported by another. In which case, accident represents qualities such as colour, shape, size etc which have to be sustained by substance. Universals are about general names which Aristotle classifies as genus, while particulars are names of individual things which Aristotle classifies as species. The argument is whether general names exist independent of particulars, or whether they are abstractions from particular things, or whether they are just labels. Plato maintains that universals exist independent of particular things and his view is known as exaggerated realism. Aristotle maintains that universals are abstractions from

particular things and his view is known as moderate realism. William of Ockham insists that names are mere labels and his view is known as nominalism.

The problem of unity and diversity touches directly on the nature, task and function of metaphysics. Unity is about harmony, order, the oneness of things, or homogeneity. Diversity is about chaos, anarchy, heterogeneity, multiplicity and plurality. So there is the one in the many and the many in the one. We see this duality in the cosmos. But this is not all that there is about unity and diversity. The real gist about this problem is that man being a metaphysical being is able to replicate this cosmic order in his processes of universe construction and reconstruction. So the whole talk about metaphysics is that man is able to from unity amidst the diversities in the world, but as he does this he recreates further diversities. So the mystery of the one in the many and the many in the one continues. Identity is about the attribute or characteristics of a thing. As it relates to the humans, identity is about a person's personality. Sometimes, we also speak of group identity (i.e. cultural identity). Going by the law of identity in logic, a thing is what it is and nothing else. In Parmenidean language we say Being is, non-Being is not. Alienation is opposite of identity. In existentialist term alienation means forfeiture or inauthenticity. For Ludwig Feuerbach alienation is the act of projecting human attributes into a supernatural entity; God, such that these human attributes become supersensible. This is the problem with anthropomorphism. For Karl Marx, alienation simply means the exploitation of labour. Alienation exists at varying degrees. There is cultural alienation, religious alienation, and economic alienation and so on.

Conclusion

The upshot of our discourse on the problems of metaphysics in general is that metaphysics deals with the analysis of those problems that not only touch on our everyday life, but act as the ground or foundation of all human knowledge. Metaphysic therefore deals with the fundamental problems of life. There is no discipline that is not anchored on one metaphysical problem/principle or another, be that discipline in the humanities, the physical sciences, or the social and managerial sciences. In the first place to be educated in a discipline is to get acquainted with the metaphysical principles underlying that discipline. One who fails to acquaint self with the metaphysical principles that embellish one's discipline has merely passed through that discipline, the discipline has not passed through such individual. Here we see the division of metaphysics into *metaphysica generalis* and *metaphysica specialis* come in handy.

Recall that under the former we examined problems dealing with Being and human being, while under the latter we delineated problems concerning the world in general (i.e. problem of reality). In relations to the academic disciplines, philosophy provides the general principles for every academic study. Other disciplines in the humanities deal essentially with the analysis of issues related to human beings (i.e. as it concerns history, language and culture). To the physical sciences belongs the task of investigating physical nature both at the organic and inorganic levels. In doing this, the physical sciences use mathematics as a tool which in itself (i.e. mathematics) is a pure rational evaluation of reality through the use of symbols and figures and for the purpose of gathering precision. The social and managerial sciences combine the methodologies of the humanities and the physical sciences to investigate other human activities such as political structure, personal and group psychology, social structure, economics,

commerce, marketing, finance, communication and so on. All of these activities would require metaphysical principles for proper coordination, if not, it will be impossible to instruct unity into the chaos of life.

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