

Lesson 4

Questions

Directions: You need to answer 2 questions from numbers 1-3 below and answer the Case Study Questions. Please number your answers on your submission with the same number from below

1. Do you believe that the earth is flat and does not move, while the stars, sun, moon, and planets circle around it in more or less regularly shaped orbits? If not, why not? (If so, why?)
2. If a tree falls in the forest when there's no one around to hear it, does it make a sound? Why or why not? If no one ever sees, hears, or touches the tree itself, what sense does it make to say that the tree is "real"?
3. Does the universe itself have a purpose? If so, what is this purpose? If not, is it, as some modern philosophers have argued, just a universe of "matter in motion"—particles and electromagnetic fields acting according to the laws of physics?

Case Study

Categories in philosophy often seem too rigid or too simple-minded to classify the complexity of our views, but perhaps the following checklist will help you understand your own position in relation to the history of philosophy:

- a. Are you a materialist? An immaterialist? Do you believe that ultimate reality can be discovered by science? Do you believe that ultimate reality is a matter of religious belief?
- b. What are the basic entities in your ontology? What is most real?
- c. Are you a monist? A pluralist? If you are a pluralist, what is the connection between the different entities in your ontology? Rank them in order of their relative reality, or explain their relationship.
- d. Are the basic entities in your ontology eternal? If not, how did they come into being?
- e. Are you an idealist? (Do you believe that the basic entities of your ontology are dependent on the existence of minds?)
- f. How do you explain the existence of (or how do you deny the existence of) the following: minds, numbers, God, tables and chairs, the law of gravity, evil, moral principles, dreams, Santa Claus?
- g. Does the universe have a purpose? Or one might ask, as Leibniz put the question, "Why is there something rather than nothing?"
- h. What does the word *real* mean to you? Using your definition, run once again through the items in Opening Question 1 and rate them for their reality in your view.
- i. Do you think this world is the real world? Or do you believe that there is an existence more real than our own?