

An Evaluation of the Theory of Forms

Emmanuel C. Umeh, PhD

Seat of Wisdom Seminary, Umuahia Campus
dr_umehemmanuel@yahoo.de

Virgilus U. Amadi, PhD

Seat of Wisdom Seminary, Umuahia Campus
virgilusamadi@yahoo.com

Abstract

This paper entitled “An Evaluation of Theory of Forms” is aimed at the critical exposition of Theory of Forms. It is evident that theory of forms addresses the perennial philosophical question of one and many as well as change and permanence. This paper argues that Plato as a progenitor of the theory of forms attempted a unification of Heraclitan and Parmenidean answers to the question of one and many, change and permanence through a historical excursus. Plato's bifurcating dualism was rejected by Aristotle, who believes in the existence of the thing in itself in the object. He substituted forms with the substances to create a unifying dualism. In the medieval era, the metaphysical question of one and many persists in the problem of universals, which is about the relationship between the objects in the mind and the objects that exist outside the mind; it is about seeing a particular object but thinking of it in a universal concept. The believe of some universalists that universals actually exist led to its rejection by the nominalists that held tenaciously that there is nothing like universals, what we actually have are mere general terms, words or names used in describing things that capture our intuitive sense to categorise them together because of their common characteristics. The rationalists and empiricists argued about the “how” of the knowability of the form, while the rationalists, like René Descartes, believe in the innateness of the universal essence, the empiricists like George Berkeley argued that universals exist only as ideas in the mind. The metaphysical debate of one and many extends even to our present era. This paper discovered that the theory of forms is magnificent and worthy of its nature adorned with superlative qualities. And to some reasonable extent provide some solutions to the problem for which they are directed, however, its attainability and knowability is still in question.

Keywords: theory of forms, substance, being, immaterialist idealism

Introduction

The theory of form is Plato's most significant philosophical contribution. Traditionally, it is considered Plato's well-reasoned answer to the philosophical perplexities of change and permanence, one and many, and the conditions for true knowledge. These philosophical problems date back to the pre-Socratic era beginning with the Ionian philosophers of Miletus (Thales, Anaximander, Anaximenes), who sought for the fundamental unifying principle of the universe. They tried to provide answer to the question: What is the primary cause of the universe; the determinate permanent thing in existence? Recognising the plurality of things and the basic resemblance between things, they maintained that despite the plurality there must be one substance that accounts for their beings. Thales named the One water; for Anaximander, it is an indeterminate boundless substance, and for Anaximenes it is the air. Heraclitus posited that one substance accounts for permanence in existence in the midst of change. In accounting for the one in many, he

argued that fire is the only basic material substance that permeates all things, and as such, it is the universal reason which is identical with all things in the universe (Stumpf, 16). Fire, which is an exemplification of change is the universal feature of reality which suggests that permanence is an illusion (Feser, 29). Disagreeing with Heraclitus' diversity of being and reality of change, Parmenides argued that the all is one, motionless, imperishable, indivisible and unchanging (Audi, 561). The One is perfect devoid of any multiplicity. It is the reality and not appearance. For Parmenides, being is the only one thing that is in existence, hence change and diversity are illusions and impossible.

The sophists, represented by Protagoras, Gorgias, and Thrasymachus propagated the relativity of things, thus rejecting certainty of knowing the thing itself, and promoting scepticism. The positions of both Heraclitus and Parmenides found their unification in Plato's dualism of the worlds: the world of forms and the world of appearance. Plato systematised the relationship that exist between the one and the many, change and permanence (Feser, 32). In a bid to explicate the issues involved in the articulation of theory of forms, this paper, examines the meaning of the term form. It undertakes an analytic historical survey of the development of the theory of forms. In addition, it presents the theory of form. Finally, it provides a critical evaluation of theory of forms.

What is Form?

Form can be described as the structure or essence of a thing and not its matter (Audi, 271). It is what makes a thing what it is. The form determines the essence of a thing. It determines what a thing is (Torre, 52). It is an essence of the sort that Socrates was eager to discover. For instance, to know the essence of justice is to know the nature of justice, to know what defines it and distinguishes it from everything that is not justice. To know justice, therefore, is to know the Form of Justice (Feser, 32). This means that to know a thing is to know its form. The forms are the changeless, eternal and nonmaterial patterns of which the actual perceivable things are only but imperfect copies (Stumpf, 55). This is why a tree can be called a tree irrespective of the type, size, nature etc. of any particular tree. What makes a tree tree is the treeness of the tree and not a particular tree available to our sensations. The form is that which enables one to recognise a thing in its particular visible nature. For Plato, it is the Idea or Form of beauty that makes one recognise beautiful objects, the idea of Justice makes it possible to identify a person as just. So, things are said to be good or beautiful because they participate in the idea of the Good or of the Beauty (Grondin, 25).

Historical Development of Theory of Forms

The coinage “theory of Forms” goes back to Plato as he tries to solve a perennial philosophical problem of his time on how to explain permanence in existence as well as one in many. As earlier stated in the introduction, Plato tries to unify the pluralistic, divisible nature of things in the world (Heraclitus) and the permanence of being (Parmenides) in his justification of duality of the world: the

world of appearance and the world of ideas (forms). Parmenides' influence on Plato was prominent as Plato takes side with him in arguing that being is the most necessary object of philosophical investigation; that being always equals to itself and not in the process of becoming. Hence, Parmenides was the only pre-Socratic philosopher that was interested in being (Grondin, 24). For him, being is, and nonbeing, is not.

Plato distinguished two levels in the knowledge of the being. The being attainable through the sense-perception, which is imperfect and simply the shadow of the real being. The imperfect beings are attainable in the world of appearance. He accepted the view of Heraclitus that objects of sense-perceptions or particular sensible objects are mutable, changeable, imperfect and always in a state of becoming, and as such cannot be objects of true knowledge (Copleston, 149). He identified the object of true knowledge to be stable, abiding, constant and possesses the capacity of being known distinctively and clearly. The knowledge of the true being is the knowledge of the universal, the form (Copleston, 150). This suggests that Plato's Forms or Ideas is that which make object graspable in the concept. It is not a subjective concept or idea in the mind, but rather Forms or Ideas refer to the objective content, referring to universal concept. This suggests that the Forms are the things in themselves, the real things, while particular individual objects participate in them. Plato argued that the existence of Forms like Beauty and Goodness makes it possible for a thing to be judged as beautiful or good (Stumpf, 56).

To the question as to whether Forms actually exist, Plato answered with categorical affirmative by saying that souls pre-existed in the spiritual realm before they were acquainted with Forms; this implied that the Forms existed prior to their embodiment in things and finally, the Forms existed in the supreme principle of rationality (Stumpf, 57). This implies that they exist in a transcendental world of their own (Stumpf, 166). The crux of Plato's thought is that Forms have independent existence from the world of appearance, from the world of sensible things. He identified three ways on how the Forms relate to things: firstly, he said that Forms are the principles of all things, which means they are the cause of the essence of all things. Secondly, the sensible world, the world of appearance participates in the Forms. Finally, a thing can be said to be a copy or imitation of the Form (Stumpf, 57). This shows that in Plato's thought, the knowledge of things through experience are knowledge of sensible things, the knowledge of concrete particular individual reality; such knowledge is changeable and unstable. Stable knowledge is only knowledge of the Forms, because it is the real world, the knowledge of universals (Mamadu, 99).

Aristotle in discussing the metaphysical problem of one and many took a moderate position, rejecting the platonic dualism of the world. He accepted the Heraclitus' position that real things can equally undergo change, he concurs with Parmenides that what is real cannot undergo change alone and with Plato, he argues that with form one can understand how something permanent can persist in

the midst of change (Feser, 57). Aristotle rejects Plato's theory of forms on the ground that it does not account for the reality of things in the world or movement of things; it cannot explain why things come into being and go also out of being (Copleston, 292-293). Mere abstraction cannot explain the reality of physical objects. The reality of things is what Aristotle referred to as form. The form of an object is the arrangement of the components that make up the object. He coined the concept of matter as potential. This suggests that the form of an object is not detached from the object itself. Every form is a form of something. Using matter and form in describing any particular object is making distinctive distinction between what a thing is made of and what it is made into (Stumpf, 84). The form, in Aristotle's view, is the universals, because without the universals, things cannot be categorised into specific classes. This suggests that matter is responsible for the individual objects, for particulars, while form confer universality. In other words, matter represents the potentiality of an object to have other properties, while form stands for actuality (Mamadu, 101). Matter and form cannot exist independently of each other in different worlds as Plato claimed. Aristotle, rather, argued that all that exists is already a determinate form. This determinate form, which already inhabits matter is the substance (Grondin, 61). Aristotle claimed that substances can be the subject of both change and predication. The changes he referred to are: growth, movement and destruction. His theory of change states that the fundamental object of change is matter. Change is seen as a process in which matter takes on reality. In the same process, matter can also lose its reality or form (Aristotle, 48). The crux of Aristotle's discussion about matter and form of a thing, is essential for explaining his points about change.

In the mediaeval era, the metaphysical question of one and many persists in the problem of universals. The problem in itself is about the relationship between the objects in the human mind and the objects that exist outside the mind; it is about seeing a particular object but thinking of it in a universal concept (Stumpf, 145). A particular triangle is recognised and known because of its participation in the universal triangularity. Universal is a general concept but the objects we see or touch are particular things. Hence, Copleston in volume two of his *History of Philosophy* attested that “objects outside the mind are individual, whereas concepts are general, universal in character, in the sense that they apply indifferently to a multitude of individuals” (139). In translating Porphyry's Introduction to Aristotle's Categories, Boethius discovered three questions, which Porphyry did not answer, as they relate to generic and specific notions. These questions are: Do universals exist in reality or a mere construction of the mind? If they actually exist, are they material or immaterial? If they are real, do they exist in sensible things or apart from them? (Stumpf, 145; Copleston 2, 137). In answering these questions, philosophers are divided in their opinions. There are those who follow Platonic thought that universals exist independently of the particulars and those that adopted Aristotelian realism with the view that universals are real entities, but their existence depend on the particulars that manifest them (Mamadu, 101). The philosophers of medieval realism (Exaggerated Realism), like John Scotus Eriugena, Remigius of Auxerre, Odo of Tournai, Anselm of Canterbury

etc. argued for the subsistent reality of the universal in which individual particular objects participate. This suggests that universals are real, the concepts are reflections of unitary substances existing independently of the particulars (Copleston 2, 140-142). It has to be, however, stated that exaggerated realists did not go as far as Plato to suggest that universals exist independently of the particulars in the world of Forms.

Boethius and other moderate realists like John of Salisbury, William of Champeaux, Gilbert de la Porree or Gilbertus Porretanus, Hugh of St. Victor and Thomas Aquinas believe that universals are abstraction from the individual objects; universals exist in the individual things but they only become universals in thought, when we think of them (Stumpf, 145). This entails that universals subsist in things and in the thought about things in the mind. In answering the three questions raised by Porphyry, Boethius argued that universals exist both in objects and in the minds, they exist concretely in things and abstractly in the mind and finally they exist both in objects and apart from them in the minds (Stumpf, 145-146). Another group of Philosophers that romanticised with universals are those that denied its existence, but argued that only particulars exist: the nominalists.

Nominalism is against exaggerated realism that considers universals as real entities of unitary substances existing independently of the particulars. In exaggerated realism, particulars (individual things) participate in the reality of the universals. Nominalism rejected such a view, but claims that there is nothing like universals, what we actually have are mere general terms, words or names used in describing many things that capture our intuitive sense to categorise them together because of their common characteristics (Feser, 45). For nominalist like Roscellinus (Roscelin), universals are only mere words that do not depict any reality, names that are composed of letters, expressed as a mere vocal emission (Stumpf, 151). Peter Abelard considered universal from its functionality; inasmuch as universality is principally ascribed to words, universal denotes particular things in a special way (Stumpf, 152). Reacting against Thomas Aquinas' position on the problem of universal, William of Ockham argued that only particular individual things exist, universal terms are only ways of thinking systematically about individual or particular things (Stumpf, 185).

The question of one and many (form/universal) did not end with the solutions offered by the exaggerated, moderate realism, or that of nominalism, it extends to rationalist metaphysics of René Descartes, Baruch de Spinoza and Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz. Descartes interest in the intellectual certainty made him to oppose traditional metaphysics and opted for a rigorous method in the attainment of certainty in knowledge. For him universal essence is merely innate, intellectual idea in the mind of any human being. This is fundamentally grounded in his view that all substances are simple and so, universals can exist neither in created things as shared properties nor in the mind of God as ideas or exemplars for creation (Copleston 4, 118). Spinoza can be said to have a new brand of nominalism about abstractions and universals; he warned against confusing universals with real

entities. This is because universals belong to his second level of perception, which he termed vague or confused experience. Universals, however, which are dependent on sensations, are confused composite images (Copleston 4, 232). Spinoza integrate his criticisms of universals into his metaphysics, epistemology, psychology, and ethics. Leibniz's contribution in this thematic is in his universal expression, by which each substance expresses the whole universe, suggesting that the complete individual notion of a substance is a universal expression of every other substance, hence his reaffirmation of the existence of a plurality of individual substances (Copleston 4, 297). These individual substances are self-sufficient and independent of other substances, and the totality of individual notion of a substance is such that it respects this requirement.

Even the empiricist George Berkeley criticised the empiricism of John Locke for allowing the existence of a world independent of the senses, for Berkeley matters do not exist in themselves, only ideas exist. A thing exists only if it perceives or is perceived (Stumpf, 262). Hence, Bertrand Russell referred to him as the first philosopher that gave reason why immediate objects of sense perceptions cannot exist independently (Russell, 5). Berkeley argued that universals like colour exist only as ideas in the mind, while descriptions like size exists in an object's substance. This is why his position is known as "immaterialist idealism." Immaterialist idealism is a philosophical monism that hold tenaciously that only minds and mental contents exist. For Berkeley, the world consists only of perceiving minds and their ideas. For Immanuel Kant, things can be known through sensibility, the ability to sense things in the world and through understanding, the ability to think about things. This suggests dualism of the world: the world of appearance (phenomenon) and the world of things in themselves (noumenon). The world of phenomenon is the world of appearance, where things are known as they appear to the senses; it is the knowledge of particulars and contingent things; while the knowledge, which is universal and necessary are only attainable in the world of noumenon. The knowledge of particulars is known as *a posteriori*, gained with data of experiences, while the knowledge of the universals, the knowledge of the forms, are *a priori* without the data of the senses, inherent in the mind (Torre, 301-302). So, for Kant the knowledge of the universals (forms), the knowledge of things in themselves is only possible in the noumenal world, but not knowable in the phenomenal world.

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel and other German idealists like Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling and Arthur Schopenhauer criticised Kant's transcendental idealism. Hegel argues that Kant fails to be sufficiently thorough in his analysis. He regarded Kant's notion of the noumenal world as an empty abstraction that means nothing. For Hegel, what exists is whatever comes to be manifested in consciousness, something sensed or thought of (Stumpf, 311).

An Exposition of the Theory of Forms

It is pertinent to state here that the essence of theory of forms is to facilitate the unification of human

thoughts, so that the objects of knowledge must be of universal concepts and not of mere subjectivity (Copleston, 164). The progenitor of this theory is Plato. In his Theory of Forms, Plato claims that the universe is divided into a world of appearance and a world of reality. The world of appearance is the physical world, which is an imperfect copy of the world of reality, while the world of reality is the world of ideas or forms, which is for Plato the ideal world. The physical world consists of both objects and shadows. The ideal world, on the other hand, contained forms and ideals for everything in the physical world. The forms served as blueprints and plans for objects in the physical world. Forms are changeless, eternal, and nonmaterial essence in which actual material objects are only imperfect copies (Stumpf, 55). This entails that every form was perfect and unchanging and had always existed in the realm of forms. This is because Plato believed that nothing perfect existed in the physical realm; all that exist in the world are imperfect versions of the forms in the real world. An example of this is the concept of Coffee and Shawarma. According to Plato's theory, the real world contains the perfect forms for these two objects which cannot be replicated on the physical world. As human beings can make coffee and shawarma to taste great, they can never be perfected. They are merely shadows of their perfect forms in the world of forms.

In the theory of forms, the essence of *shawarmaness* and *coffeeness* is neither material nor mental, they have their own peculiar type of existence: as abstract entities. The truthfulness of the essence of shawarma and coffee are also true, in Plato's opinion, of the essence of every existing things. What is known of the essence of anything existing is universal, which is also immaterial and extra-mental. They are known through the power of the intellect and not through the senses. What are known are the forms (Feser, 34). Plato uses the “allegory of the cave” to explain his theory of forms. In the story, Plato describes several individuals who are held together in a cave with their necks and legs tied, so that they cannot turn their heads. In turn, they are forced to look at the wall of the cave, which is lit by a fire behind them. Plato states that puppeteers in front of the fire project shadows of various “artefacts” on the wall in front of the individuals. Plato then suggests that over time these individuals will tend to believe that the truth is nothing but the shadows of these artefacts (Stumpf, 49-51).

An Evaluation of the Theory of Forms

In theory of Forms, the world of form is magnificent and worthy of its nature adorned with superlative qualities. And to some reasonable extent provide some solutions to the problem for which they are directed. Despite all its uniqueness, there is almost a consensus among philosophers starting with Plato and seconded by Aristotle, that the world of form created even more problems than the solutions it affords. Due to its failures like the hypotheses of earlier philosophers, it is irrelevant in solving the questions at the heart of philosophy that are manifested into a metaphysical and epistemological query which are the problems of change and permanence, one and many, and the problem of knowledge.

One question that emerges as a critique against the theory of Forms is the necessity of its existence. Aristotle questions the reasonability for the separateness of the Form, when he writes: "... it would seem to be impossible for the substance and that of which it is the substance to be separate. And so how could the Ideas, if they are substances of things, be separate from them?" (Aristotle, 22). One might defend Plato from this critique if one should follow the philosophical principle of sufficient cause, which states that everything must have a reason for its existence. In this case, the sensible world therefore does not persist in itself, its sufficient reason, the sufficient reason is held by the Forms. On an extensive scale, even the Forms are not sufficient reasons for themselves. As Plato argues, the sufficient reason for the Form is the One. However, it fails to show why the essences of things should stay transcendentally apart from those things to which they are their essences. Pantaleon Iroegbu recognised the irrelevance of the necessity of Forms, when he avers, "You are asked to help explain this world and you run away from it to another. How do we explain that other, the ideal?" (139). Another consequence of an exaggeration of Forms would imply a partial meaninglessness of the sensible world. This explains why Nietzsche regarded Plato's world of Form as a dangerous illusion because of its drastic devaluation of physical realities (Bett, Net).

Another question mark as far as the world of forms is concerned is the question: Is the World of Form an intra-mental or rather extra-mental reality that exists only within the confines of Plato's philosophical system? Plato would agree more or less that universals are not mere subjective cognitive contents, but they have objective existence outside the mind. They exist in a transcendental space. Aristotle disputes seriously the existence of the Forms as he asserts "further, of the ways in which we show that there are Forms, none makes these evident. For from some of these ways no deduction is necessarily generated, whereas from some Forms are also generated of things of which we think there are no forms" (20).

Plato's theory of forms is also questionable for its multiplicity of Form. He initially at a hypothetical stage was content with postulating the existence of the Forms of moral and aesthetic values like justice and beauty, later on, he reluctantly admitted with difficulty, the Forms of other natural objects. With this admittance, Plato as he states in his dialogue *Parmenides* that whatever has an idea has its own Form, therefore there would be the Form of bad, filth and many other ideas whose recognition as Form may seem absurd and leading to a multiplicity of Forms. This is a consequence of Plato's World of Forms. Aristotle would strongly object to the excessive multiplication of the Forms which is based on the logic of Plato that everything which has an Idea has a corresponding Form. In the *Metaphysics*, Aristotle disappointedly stated thus: "As for those who posited the Ideas, first in looking to find the causes of the beings that exist here, they introduced others, equal in number to these – as if a person who wished to count the beings were to think that he would not be able to do it while there were so few of them, and so tried to count them by making more" (20).

An intersection or a set union of Forms within the plurality of Forms would lead to the development of further Forms without corresponding things in the sensible world. On another hand, there may be due to human genius which Plato may have neglected a multiplicity of particulars without their universals here in the sensible world without a resemblance in the World of Forms. Let us consider the particulars of software programmes that exist presently without their supposed Form of software programmes. Therefore, a multiplicity of Form to account for things may lead to an imbalance in correspondence with the World of Forms and the particulars. According to Pantaleon Iroegbu “the Forms purposelessly double reality. They unnecessarily transport us to an artificial realm instead of explaining the realities we experience here as they are” (139).

As stated earlier, Forms have some relational existence with things for which they are their essences. The relationship between Forms and things is expressed through participation and imitation. Aristotle contends that Plato adopted the relation of imitation used by the Pythagoreans and thereafter changes this relation of imitation nominally into a relation of participation (15). In the dialogue *Parmenides*, Socrates explained that there are two ways of expressing the relationship between the Form and individual objects. The two ways are participation and imitation (Copleston, 182). However, in the examination of the relationship between Forms and things, some difficulties emerge. If Plato uses the metaphors of participation, imitation and reminiscence for soul-body relationship, then there is no substantial causality and the problem of origin is left unsolved (Iroegbu, 139). More acute problems with the mode of participative relationship were identified by Plato in *Parmenides*. Do particular objects participate in the totality of idea or solely in part of it? If a whole participation of things is strictly followed, then the idea which is one would be entirely in each of many individuals (Copleston, 182). If the second alternative is pursued, then the Form is at the same time a unitary and divided among the particulars of the sensible world. With the relationship of imitation, more problems arise. Against this relationship, *Parmenides* an interlocutor in the eponymous dialogue argues that the imitation of things to the Form leads to an indefinite multiplication of Forms to explain such a relationship. Aristotle extends this argument to what is referred to as the Third man argument. The Third man argument is a “regress argument that purports to show that if there is even one Form of F, then there are infinitely many Forms of F. That a regress is in itself an objection to the theory of Forms because Forms ought to be unique” (Fine, online). Imagine the Form of Goodness taken as G_1 . The Form G_1 is itself good and therefore attributes itself, it follows that G_1 partakes because of its self-predication in another Form of Goodness say G_2 which also predicates itself, this would then lead to the need of Form G_2 to partake in another Form of Goodness G_3 . Therefore, the series of the Form of Goodness continues ad infinitum. This destroys the delicate nature of the World of Forms.

Finally, the question of the Knowability of the Forms needs to be addressed. This objection of the knowability of the Form was raised in *Parmenides* and was left unanswered by Plato (Copleston,

184). Can human beings, given their contingent nature, know the absolute? It has been shown by different philosophers that Humans have the ability to know things of contingent nature and till then are ill-capacitated to know the Forms.

Conclusions

The major problems in the theory of Forms lie less with the sensible world but more with the World of Form. Plato may have underestimated the cognitive and ontological powers latent in the sensible world, which discouragingly led him to an excessive idealism. The sensible world is in fact intelligible. These may in fact suggest that change and permanence are actually the property of the sensible world. This was first realized by Heraclitus and later on by Aristotle who moved beyond the Platonic system and to a greater extent addressed these problems. Despite the deficiencies of the World of Forms, we can agree that Plato's idealism in his theory of Forms, his epistemological dualism, and his global philosophical dialectics provide us with a solid tool for understanding the reality that is both a given and a challenge.

Works Cited

- Aristotle, *Metaphysics*. Translated with Introduction and Notes by C. D. C. Reeve, Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2016.
- Audi, Robert (ed). *Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956.
- Bett, R. "Nietzsche and Plato: in Brill's companion to German Platonism. Retrieved from <https://brill.com/downloadpdf/book/edcoll/9789004285163/BP000018.xml>. Accessed on 15th December, 2023.
- Copleston, Frederick. *A History of Philosophy*, Volume 1: Greece and Rome, London: Bloomsburg Publishing Plc., 2003.
- Copleston, Frederick. *A History of Philosophy*, Volume 2: Medieval Philosophy, London: Bloomsburg Publishing Plc., 2003.
- Copleston, Frederick. *A History of Philosophy*, Volume 4: Rationalists Descartes to Leibniz, London: Bloomsburg Publishing Plc., 2003.
- De Torre, Joseph. *Christian Philosophy*, Philippines: Vera-Reyers, Inc. 1989.
- Feser, Edward. *The Last Superstition: A Refutation of the New Atheism*, Indiana: St. Augustine's Press, 2010.
- Fine, Gail. Third Man Argument in: on Ideas: Aristotle's criticism of Plato's Theory of Form. Retrieved from <https://academic.oup.com/book/27026/chapter/196297782>. Accessed on 15th December, 2023.
- Grondin, Jean. *Introduction to Metaphysics, From Parmenides to Levinas*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2012.

- Iroegbu, Panteleon. *Metaphysics, The Kpim of Philosophy*. Owerri: International Universities Press Ltd, 1995.
- Mamadu, Titus Terver. "The Problems of Being, Substance, Essence and Existence, and Universals", in: Uduigwomen Andrew F. and Akpan Chris O. (editors), *Metaphysics: A Book of Readings*, Calabar: Ultimate Index Book Publishers Ltd., 2012.
- Russell, Bertrand. *The Problem of Philosophy*, New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1912.
- Stumpf, Samuel Enoch and Fieser, James. *Philosophy: History and Problems*, New York: Mcgraw-Hill, 2003.