

1. What is metaphysics? Is there anything special about the methods of metaphysics, or about its subject matter? Illustrate your answer with one example of a metaphysical problem or controversy.

It is always hard to put ourselves into new situations: to meet something new, something that is unfamiliar, to visit a new country, to meet a stranger. All this can make us very uncomfortable. We always need extra energy to go through this process of change. When I learn something new, it makes me tired. But the result is I get to improve in every process of change that I am able to go through. Metaphysics is a big change for us as students. It is an area in which we have to forget our old world. My old version of me may continue to live my life, but another version, who wants to study metaphysics, has to separate from my original version and observe my original life from a new separate perspective. My second version of me will be able to see things differently as it isn't in the arena of life of the every day. From that position, I may have the ability to study metaphysics – the philosophical area that steps beyond our current beliefs, perspective or our empirical world.

Many metaphysical problems focus on the reality of things. We can't touch it or experiment on it using scientific methods. Maybe today, modern technology will answer metaphysical questions as it isn't real because it is beyond the physical world and so it can't be proven. For metaphysics students, we can't only think or believe in the physical world alone. Otherwise, we will limit ourselves to a small room. But yes the way that the scientist can answer many physical questions makes science more reliable, trustable and makes it easier to win the debate. How can I win the debate about the issue of the reality of this world if I can't prove it in a physical way? I will never be successful in convincing other people to follow or believe me. But if I try to prove that this table is real, it's such an easy job to prove.

Metaphysics needs us to think beyond our current world; to think beyond our empirical world. But how are we able to understand metaphysics if we can't use the current tools in the world such as language, our five senses or our empirical channel? Actually, I don't experience much difference between metaphysics and other subjects of philosophy. Philosophy always needs us to ignore an unexamined resource anyway. Metaphysics may want to explore a question like, 'How does this world exist?'. Myths may tell various stories and the religious may be convinced by their own beliefs. But the philosopher cannot be satisfied with just that resource. It is a resource that comes from the world that we used to consume. We can use the negative dialectic method of Socrates. We can consider the question 'How does this world exist?' and we create a ladder of rationality. The leap of reason that can take us to a higher position from the beginning, step by step. At every step, we have to use the dialectic method to eliminate unreasonable assumptions from the process.

We may try to figure out the problem of the existence of the mind. Does the mind really exist or is it only one part of our physical body system? Are we made of only material substance in this world the same as the trees, water or stone? What is the reality of our mind? This kind of question can make us doubt ourselves and our ability, and this is a metaphysical question. To try to find the answer to this question, we can use the trial and error strategy. Descartes may believe that my mind exists because my mind is asking the question, right now. He may argue that my mind exists and doesn't need space and time. It is a non-material substance. But we can try to follow negative dialectics by continuing to doubt Descartes' argument to try to eliminate any unreasonable idea or unsound argument from our process. We may

question whether a non-material thing can exist and not need space and time. How about the superman character in the comic book? I am thinking about this character right now, it is in my mind. I talked about this character with my friends this morning. Can this superman character exist? How can we prove that? This would be an example of a non-material thing that does not need space and time in order to exist.

For me, metaphysics is like an extreme idealism and extreme anti-materialism. What makes metaphysics more difficult than other areas of philosophy isn't the metaphysical problems but the methods that we use to achieve the goal. We can't use the tools that we are used to. We have to go to the other side of the world and work in a very unfamiliar place with strangers. It can be a very awkward moment. This can make everything more difficult. The purpose of asking metaphysical questions is to become better than we currently are.