

Welcome students to the
course on History of Ideas.

The title of this unit is the
Rationalistic Concept of Substance and
the name of the module is Leibniz's
The Concept of Pre-Established Harmony.

In this unit we will be looking at
God as the Creator in Leibniz's
philosophy, the pre established
harmony of the world
and extension space and time. The
learning outcomes. At the end of this
unit you will be able to understand the
centrality of God in Leibniz's philosophy,
analyze the concept of pre-established
harmony according to Leibniz,
analyze the significance of the
concept of pre-established harmony
in relation to God and comprehend
Leibniz's view on extension space and
time in relation to his philosophy.

Now in the previous module we

looked at the concept of monads.

And we said that each monad looks or

perceives the world in a different way.

The analogy with which we explained this

was that of a TV having various channels.

So I look at my screen and I see a

a particular way in which a show

or a video is taken.

And someone else looks at their screen

and has a different version of the way

the story is shown or the show

is taken or the video is made. Now

we need to understand that Leibniz

takes for granted or argues initially

that God is the creator and God has

orchestrated or God has designed

the universe in a particular way,

because of which each of us experiences

reality in different ways.

But at the same time it's the same reality.

Alright,

so here in the first slide we understand

that God is the Creator in Leibniz's

philosophy,

Leibniz gives a number of

arguments for the existence of God.

These include a version of the ontological

argument which was previously developed

by Saint Anselm in the 11th century,

and Descartes's argument in the 17th century,

and the argument for internal and

necessary truths as explained

by Saint Augustine's argument.

Now he also presented the argument

from design that's commonly

called the teleological argument.

Leibniz's version of this is unique,

for he does not simply argue from

the beauty and harmony of nature,

but argues from the pre-established

harmony of all substances.

Leibniz introduces the concept of pre-established harmony and this pre-established harmony is created by God who is the creator who makes sure that everything works in harmony because he has pre-established it.

So the pre-established harmony of the world is as follows:

This account of the plurality of monads raises the question:

“in what sense is there one world?”

How do we say that if reality is plural, that is,

it is made up of so many millions and millions of monads then how is it possible that we all experience the same reality or this one world?

Maybe we are each experiencing radically different universes.

Leibniz addresses

this problem with his notion of the

pre established harmony.

So when he created the World Leibniz

says God designed the internal nature

of each Monad so that the experience

of any given monad corresponds

with varying degrees of clarity to

the experience of another monad.

So what is being said here is that

God designed each monad in such a

way that the experience of one monad

is similar, but not the same,

is similar to the experience

of another monad,

and when two different

monads experience reality,

it seems as if they are

experiencing the same reality.

So imagine a whole orchestra in

which each individual musician

is locked in a separate room.

They have before them the same score

and similarly calibrated metronomes,

so they have the same sheet

music that they're following.

Each musician plays his or her part

without interacting with the other musicians,

collectively they produce

the totality of the Symphony.

So Leibniz also uses the

example of two clocks synchronized

so that they move their hands in

unison even though there is no

causal interaction between them.

Look at the first example,

each musician is locked in a separate room,

but when you listen to all of them together,

they produce beautiful harmony or Symphony.

They are not interacting with each other,

but at the same time.

They're producing musical symphonies.

In the same way,

two clocks can show the exact

same time without having any

causal connection between them.

And this is how all the monads

or all the minds in the world

exist or function. According to

Leibniz they do not interact.

Between them there is no interaction.

There is definitely no causal

interaction between them,

but at the same time they experience the

same reality because God has orchestrated

or God has created them in such a way.

God has synced them together in such

a way that they will experience the

same reality. Leibniz argues that

God created the world so perfectly

that each substance acts according

to its own law of unfolding

and this at the same time in perfect

harmony with all other substances.

The mind has a

distinct point of view

of the world by virtue of its being

the center of some mass or body,

and that the unfolding of

the mind is in accord with the

law of the corporeal machine.

So the mind functions in such a

way that the mind and the body

are in harmony at the same time.

All the minds together are in harmony

or perfect harmony with each other,

because God has designed them to be

in perfect harmony with each other.

So God has programmed everything

into us from the very beginning.

I believe it uses the analogy

of God as a screenwriter.

Imagine God is writing a play,

so when he created the world,

he wrote you into the script.

It includes all of your

life's experiences.

To continue the analogy,

your life as you are experiencing

it now is the playing of the

videotape that God produced.

So God has already written the play and

now you are only playing the video tape.

Likewise for every other monad

the present is big with the future

and laden with the past as it

continuously unfolds its own story

and perspective on the universe.

Each monad is big with the future,

that is it unfolds the future.

Each Monad does not know what is

going to happen and at the same

time is laden with the past,

meaning it carries the past with it.

So all these analogies explains Leibniz

is the concept of pre-established harmony.

The pre established harmony here means

that God has already put everything
in harmony or has already placed
everything in harmony and it is because
God has given this pre-established
harmony that all the monads can
function together without actually
interacting with each other.

This is the concept of
pre established harmony,
as explained by Leibniz.

Now let us look at the next
very important concept and that
is extension space and time.

So even if Leibniz has convinced us
that every part of nature is permeated by
active responsive units of mental life,
a problem still needs to be addressed.

Since these minds or monads
are extended and indivisible,
how do we account for our
experience of extended things?

So if minds are extended,
if minds are metaphysical or mental,
then how do we experience physical things?
How can something be metaphysical,
How can something that does not have a
body experience something that has a body?

So let us return to Leibniz's
example of the rainbow.

So when we look at a rainbow,
it looks like a broad multi colored
band stretched across the sky. However,
we know it is really not a unified object,
so the rainbow is not something
that you can break.

A rainbow is not something that you can hold,
you just know that it exists
because it is a phenomena.

We know that
it really is not a unified object,
but an appearance.

Rainbows are an appearance that is created

by a multiplicity of water droplets.

Similarly,

extension is not a property

of things themselves,

but is the way things appear to us.

So according to Leibniz things only

look as if they are physical.

But actually they are like the rainbow.

It appears like a phenomenon.

It is a phenomenon.

It appears like a real object,

but it is not really a real object.

When we experience a repetition

of monads similar to one another,

we appear to see an extended object in

the same way a painter can juxtapose

dabs of paint on a canvas to create

the illusion of depth in the appearance

of spatial extension that isn't really there.

Of course,

like all analogies,

these examples eventually breakdown.

So here the analogy is that

monads are similar to one another,

and when we experience

similar monads continuously.

It looks like as if there is

a reality out there that is,

there are physical objects around us,

but like Leibniz argues that just

like a rainbow is only an appearance,

just like a painter creates only

an appearance of space and depth

on a canvas in the same way reality

around us is only an appearance

and it only looks like as if there

are physical objects around us,

so the drops of water making the

rainbow and the drops of paint

creating the appearance of depth

present themselves to us as

small extended particles.

In reality, however,
they themselves are also appearances,
created from innumerable extended monads.

One application that follows from this
is that space and time do not exist,
apart from our spatially and
temporally organized experiences,
we tend to think in terms of neurons.

The common sense view, is that
space is like a vast container.

So when Newton explains space and time,
he understands space
as containing objects.

If you remove all the objects from space,
what will remain is a vast empty
bucket or container, and that is space.

But Leibniz says no.

There is no such thing as space
and time. Space and time are only
illusions according to my beliefs.

So according to Newton,

if you removed all the physical
bodies from the universe,
something would still remain and
that is space or empty space.

Hence for Newton Space is an
absolute self subsisting entity.

But according to Leibniz space is
not a thing that exists all by itself.

Instead it is a system of relations
between the elements of our experience.

So space is basically a system of
relations or connections between
the elements of our experience.

Similarly,

time is not like a stream in which we float.

It does not exist by itself.

I'm a simply a measure of the
successive relationships between
the events we experience.

So when we talk about past,
present and future,

time doesn't really exist.

It's just the way we talk about things.

It's just the way we connect

things or we understand things.

But time doesn't really exist in space,

doesn't really exist according to Leibniz.

With this we come to the end

of the philosophy of Leibniz.

These are my references,

thank you.