

10. The ontological foundation

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10. 1 Elements of ontology

As already mentioned, “ontology” means theory of being, theory concerning being. It talks about everything that is even remotely real and this in the broadest sense of the word.

Even fictions are ontologically “something,” as is a dream. A person's dream can be so profound that his or her life is profoundly affected by it. We stressed (3.1) that everything that is 'something' in any case possesses an existence and essence. Existence affirms the fact “that something is,” essence “what something is. Logic contemplates reality and grasps reality. Therefore, it is ontological. The thinking subject is attuned to the truth revealed by the object. The equal in the thinker, grasps, understands, yes knows the equal in the object. Plato spoke of a light metaphysics (5.1; 5.3) that leads to the grasping of the idea, of the objective in reality. The comprehension in the subject answers to the comprehension in the object. This grasping transcends phenomenological knowledge, which is limited to the purest possible representation of the given. Thus, it is a first step on the road to inner witnessing. Such knowledge, however, does not reach the essence of the given. The idea is too all-encompassing, too transcendent.

According to J. Montenot, dir., *Encyclopedie de la philosophie*, Libr. Gen. Française, 2002, 1180, the term “ontology” (understand: bringing up “being(s),” i.e. reality) was introduced by R. Göckel (Goclenius (1547/1628) in his *Lexicon philosophicum* (1613/1615).

1. Prosocratic philosophy.

One can see, with regard to contemplating what is real, a number of strands in prosocratic philosophy.

- A number of philosophers such as Homer (+/- -800/-700) and Hesiodos (+/- -800 /-600) think strongly theologically. For them, the world of the gods constitutes reality par excellence.

- The “Milesian” philosophers, including Thales (-624/-545), Anaximandros (-610/-547) and Aximines (-588/-524), so named after the place of their origin, Miletos, on the west coast of Asia Minor, seek the primal ground of all that is not so much with the gods as in the “fusus” or nature of things itself. For them, the essence of all that exists is material, albeit a kind of tenuous, fine dust.

- After them come a number of thinkers for whom the ground of all reality consists not of many gods, or tenuous substance, but of wisdom. Calling them with a tautological term “philosophers of wisdom,” the word “philo-sophos” indeed already expresses a “desire for wisdom. Among them we find, among others, Xenophanes of Kolofon (-580/-490), Pythagoras of Samos (-580/-500), Parmenides of Elea (-515/-445) and Herakleitos of Ephesus (-535/-465).

Theological philosophers. Already Homer mentions the term “being,” “on” (plural “onta”). Indeed, Homer serves himself as the interpreter of the goddess Mnèmosunè (expanded consciousness) and her muses (understand: inspiring female spirits) who reveal to him “the previously being, the now being and the future being.” Homer (Lat.) - 'Homèros' meant “blind man.” He is the originator of the Iliad and the Odusseia, the oldest known and preserved literary works of Greek literature. Hesiodos of Ascra with his “Theogonia” and his “Works and Days” continues that poetic tradition.

Later, Homer and Hesiodos were called “theologoi,” theologians, because in their works man does provide the foreground of their world of life and thought, but deities, divine spirits and heroes the living background.

These philosophers focused mainly on mythical contemplation, less on rational - reasonable reasoning. Yet Hesiod had already pointed out that muses proclaim both truth and falsehood: “all the 'shame' (theft, adultery, mutual deceit) Homer and Hesiod impute to their gods and goddesses. So that a critical tone towards the gods could already be heard.

Milesian philosophers. The Milesian philosophers sought the “*fusis*,” the essence of things, the steering principle, much more in the earthly self. *Fusis*' for the natural philosophers was the genesis and development of being, but also the origin of that genesis, the “past, present and future being.” That all-embracing will in time become the main theme of ontology. All being is governed by a kind of tenuous or fine substance, which gives things in the world their existence and their form.

Thales of Miletos posited “water” as the primal principle (3.6). Anaximandros of Miletus saw that that which makes all things intelligible is situated in the incomprehensible. According to tradition, Anaximenes of Miletus sees it in 'psuchè', inhaled and exhaled air, that through which life is possible, or even in 'aèr', air without more. That the primal principle is called 'air' is not surprising when one knows that Anaximenes says: our soul, which is air, breath, holds us together. The word 'air' means what possesses psychic life. This means that the universe principle is something soulful; which represents an advance over Thales (oceanic water as a source of life of divine nature) and Anaximandros (the unlimited that directs all-encompassing), who have underthought soul life in the universe.

Philosophers of Wisdom.

- Xenophanes of Kolofon impressed by the Milesian philosophers, fiercely criticizes the concept of God of the mythical theologians. His concept of God is different: there is only one God, calm, unmoved. Thinking, he controls and governs the universe. Xenophanes no longer believes in the educational ideal of Homer and Hesiodos: the “*aretè*,” “*virtus*,” virtue, is no longer chivalry as with Homer e.g., but “*sophia*,” wisdom.

- Pythagoras of Samos and his thinkers were orphic and mathematically oriented. The orphic religion is a mystery religion that states, among other things, that the human soul has divine qualities and is immortal. Pythagoras is also credited with the famous theorem in plane geometry which states that the square of the hypotenuse in a right-angled triangle is equal to the sum of the squares of the rectangular sides.

- Parmenides of Elea (2.3; 6.6) is the founder of the eleatic school. His statement, “It is a necessity to say and think that being is” (i.e., the principle of identity) is clearly more philosophical than what Homèros and Hesiodos proclaim concerning “All that was, is, will be” Parmenides already emphasizes the objective character of being as being. He states that one must “conceive being according to itself.” I.e. not according to ourselves e.g.. “Being is after all itself ('tauton')”, i.e. coincides with itself. Being thus possesses an identity which, if one is honest, one must conceive with due reverence.

In passing: that very thing makes the difference between “alètheia,” truth, and “doxa,” “opinion. It involves revelation of being or reality, but dichotomously: one does not know if it is true. Reality, as Parmenides conceives it, is indivisible. For him, there is only one being, while any multiplicity is appearance. Even more: individual beings (singulars, singular being) are also emptiness and appearance, for their isolation conflicts with the indivisibility and uniformity of the, thinkable and sayable being. Individual being is therefore unthinkable and unsayable.

Parmenides can pass as the forerunner of later ontology. Doesn't G. Elisabeth M. Anscombe, *From Parmenides to Wittgenstein*, Oxford, 1981, say that “Parmenides is the foundational text upon which the whole of Western philosophy is but a set of footnotes”?

- Herakleitos of Ephesus: The basic idea for this thinker is that the nature of things is not immutable, as Parmenides stated, but just the opposite, namely that all being is subject to constant change. He formulated this insight with the words “pantha rei,” usually poorly translated by “everything flows” but implying a steering principle: “everything proceeds according to a 'kuklos,’” a kind of recovery that comes when a growth has a deviation.

2. Socratic philosophy.

Included in this lineage are the “big three”: Socrates (-470/-399), Plato (-427/347) and Aristotle (-484/-322). Let us mention of the latter, with regard to the search for the ontological basis, that he left behind a set of books that collectively bear the name “Metaphysics. O.Willmann, *Abriss der Philosophie*, Wien, 1959-5, 338, says that Aristotle called what we call 'ontology' “first philosophy” on the grounds that it brings up the 'archai,' the reasons, which all that was, now is, ever will be. He considers them 'sophia,' 'wisdom,' perhaps to stay true to the Pythagorean - Platonic tradition. He calls them “theologikè,” theological subject, as the Eleates suggested who called the one, absolute being “god.

Relation to logic. Concepts, incorporated into judgments and reasoning, denote realities in the being mode of “formae,” forms of being. Logic can be expressed at once as the study of that operation of thought which concludes from a given reality, expressed in prepositional sentences, to a derivable reality, brought up in the after sentence, i.e., reasoning. In other words, logic is ontology in terms of “if, then” sentences (implications). Not surprisingly, the basic axioms (concerning identity, contradiction, excluded third) are precisely the same as those of ontology. Also, the categories of logic occupy a central place in Aristotle's ontology (concerning the being of what is, and its essential determinations).

Being as being. That, according to Aristotle, is the object of ontology. Note: 'being' and 'being' are to be understood in the broadest (= transcendental) sense as soon as something but 'something' is, i.e. not - nothing, is the object of ontology. Consequence: a good vernacularization of 'ontology' is 'theory of reality'. As an aside: do not confuse 'transcendental' with the Kantian 'transcendental' (meaning 'critical'). 'Transcendental' means 'all-encompassing,' i.e. all that is even 'something,' as encompassing.

Conceptual content. O. Willmann, o.c., 453, cites a basic text of Aristotle in this regard (De interpretatione 3, in fine). “ 'Einai', being, is not a 'sèmeion', a knower of some being”. Also: when one says 'on', being, (Note: of some other being), it is a 'psilon', an empty term, because 'on' means (Note: as a characteristic of some other being) nothing. Only in connection with another term does 'on' acquire meaning”. Model. If from “a girl”

- a being is said to be “on,” being, then that is a “psilon,” an empty term. Reason: anything that is “something” is “on,” being. By contrast: 'on', being, is a basic concept in any definition. Thus: “A being that is of the female sex and still young is a girl”. As a basic concept (1), precised by added concepts (2) it is definitional (3) seeing. - So Aristotle rightly says that only in connection with another term (here: the added terms “of the female sex” and “still young”) being is definite, “sèmeion” of something.

10. 2 Nominalism and realism

O. Willmann, *Die wichtigsten philosophischen Fachausdrücke in historischer Anordnung*, Kempten / Munich, 1909,68, explains a scholastic formula, namely, “Forma post rem, in re, ante rem.” Translated, “Knowing and thinking content after the given, in the given, and before the given.”

- *The forma “after” the data* (“formae post rem”) are the notions, “ideas,” concepts, which we, together with the terms attached to them, form, “conceive,” “design” within our mind (“consciousness”), intramentally, that is.

- *The forma “in” the data* (“formae in re”) is that which makes the models of knowledge, thought and action what they are (such that they are distinguishable from the rest of the overall reality). It is delineated against the rest in the business definition, which articulates what something is, and is discoverable in the data itself under investigation.

- *The forma “for” the data* (“formae ante rem”) are, in the Pythagorean-Platonic-Christian interpretation, as in the case of a Kepler, the ideas (conceptions, models) of God, which he, in creating, put into the realities.

The Universalist discussion.

The discussion, initiated from antiquity between sophists, followers of Aristotle and followers of Plato, was, from early Scholasticism (1000/1200), resumed. “The course of the struggle between nominalism and realisms, in the Christian Middle Ages bears a surprising resemblance to the same struggle, in antiquity.” (O. Willmann, *Gesch.*, ii, 352). The question is whether universals really exist, either in or outside things, or whether they are merely products of thought.

'Ontological' is this dispute, in that it raises the question of whether and to what extent our general notions, whether abstract or ideational ('universalialia' in medieval Latin) are the representation of reality. Essentially, three different stances can be taken in this: a nominalist, a conceptualist, or an idealist.

The Platonic conception of the idea has already been discussed under 9.3, where the “idea,” the essential form or forma “narcis,” was explained.

A being form, forma, 'form' for short, in traditional logic is that by which something is distinguishable from the whole 'rest of reality.' In themselves, being forms are 'thought-forms,' they can be singular, general or, even, all-encompassing.

Three basic modalities.

The scholastics distinguished three basic modalities:

1. *Formae post rem: Conceptual nominalism.*

The nominalists predicate that a concept (definition) is only a “name” (“nomen” in Latin) that belongs to language. They assign reality only to individual things. Whether something - in reality (the ontological - modal aspect) corresponds to this, must, in all cases, be proven.

The nominalist interpretation, believes that only concrete things are real. It holds that universals refer only as vague labels to concrete things in the world. Only the world as it is sensorially experienced is real. Man determines and names what is real and does so according to premises of his own choosing. By the way, the Latin word 'nomen' means 'name'. Hence also the term “nominalism. Consciousness, psychic ability, religion, deities, prayer, expanded consciousness ... then, of course, become a difficult thing to digest for the nominalist, because it escapes ordinary sense perception. In very religious ancient Greece, such an attitude of mind was rather the exception. In the works of the poet Homer, for example, one finds hardly a page in which no gods are mentioned.

- **Protagoras of Abdeira** (-480/-410, in Tracia) held a nominalist view. From him also is the famous statement : “Man is the measure of all things”. Until then, for the Greeks these were the gods. Plato, in his book *Hippias maior*, shows Socrates, his teacher, in conversation with the nominalist Hippias. Socrates wants to force him into a universal definition of “the beautiful” and asks him, “What is the beautiful? Hippias does not arrive at the common, universal concept of 'beautiful' because he always sticks to concrete examples. The universal, the common characteristic in “all that is clean,” interests him, as a nominalist, very little. For him it is something like losing himself in the vagueness of generalization. Thus he answers, e.g., “A beautiful girl, that is clean.” He sticks to “the applications,” the “concrete models” but does not find “the rule. He never abstracts from many examples the general idea of 'clean'.

- **Leo Apostel**, (1925/2009), internationally known philosopher, in: *Humo* Nr 2247 (29.09.1981, 50/53) also expressed his nominalist attitude. (1.5). This is not to question the existence of universally valid concepts. However, his attitude to life does testify to the absence of a religious ethic, whereby he also sometimes questions whether everything around him still represents reality.

- **Geoffrey James Warnock** (1923/1955), a Berkeley - specialist once took issue, as an analyst, with universals, as universals, this, in the long nominalist tradition, which presupposes that all that is extramental reality is radically individual and in no way, per se, general.

B. Russell (1872/1970), British philosopher and logician, ridicules Warnock as a nominalist as follows: “Long ago there was a tribe who lived on the banks of a river. Some claim that that river was called 'Isis' and the tribesmen 'Isidians.' The tribe's language knew the words 'roach,' 'trout,' 'perch' and 'pike.' But not the word 'fish.' A group of Isidians, who had gone further down the river than usual, caught what we call a 'salmon' there. A heated debate ensued, immediately. Some claimed it was a kind of “pike. Others that it was “something dark and terrible” and, immediately, that anyone who mentioned it should be expelled from the tribe. At that moment, a stranger appeared on the banks of another river, despised by the Isidians. “In our language - so he spoke - we have the word 'fish,' which applies to roaches as well as trout, to perch as well as pike. And likewise to the animal that now causes so much disagreement here”.

The Isidians were indignant: “What is the use - so they said - of such newfangled words? For everything we catch, in the river, we have a word in our language; for it is always either a roach or a trout or a perch or a pike. You can argue against this position what happened, a short time ago, in a lower part of our sacred river. But in our opinion, the economy of language requires a law, which forbids mentioning this event. Consequently, we consider your word 'fish' a sample of worthless pedantry”.

The nominalist, viz., invokes, among other things, the “economy” or economy of terms, to reason away “superfluous” things as general terms. Russell shows, humorously, in this philosophical fable that this economy is not without its problems after all.

We saw that the adoption of universal (juxtaposed with the private) notions ('terms') accepted by the Isidians (= nominalists) is a matter of summative induction: “if roaches, trout, perch, pike each exhibit the characteristic k ('fish'), each individually as a species (= private collection), then k ('fish'), at once, is verified for the 'summa', sum (= totality) of species; in short: if all (species) individually, then all collectively.

2. Formae in re: The “abstract” interpretation.

The concept realists know, of course, also that a concept, in itself, is not yet proof of the fact that, to it, something - outside - the - mind, which thinks that concept, exists. But they are convinced - against the conceptual nominalists - that, in objective reality, something that has the same structure corresponds to that the idea and term, which we define. But only after

analysis: first it is a lemma, a working hypothesis, which can serve as a guide in the investigation of reality. When the idea, examined for its veracity to reality, is verified, then one knows that the conceptual realist, on that point, is right: the working hypothesis is more than a name, more than a concoction. Being does not exist outside things, but in things

Abstract interpretation, also called “conceptual realism,” is one type of “realism. Realism consists in labeling what is real as real. Therefore, concept realism means that concepts, which represent reality, are also represented as objective, real. The concept is thus understood as the rational representation, in our minds, of a given. Whereas Hippias, as a nominalist, remained with concrete examples (“a beautiful girl, that is clean”), the concept realist does arrive at a rational representation of the beautiful. From the many concrete examples (the magnitude) he abstracts the “general rule,” the “general property,” or the similarity in the many examples. The focus is now no longer on size, but on content. Otherwise said, not to the many “applications,” but to the “rule. The abstract realist does not ask, “What things are clean?”, but rather, “What right is the clean?” With e.g. Aristotle, the abstractionists claim that a universal concept is abstracted from the singular - concrete data (hence : 'abstractionism') : the singular - concrete facts, as applicative models or applications, are summed up in one rule (the regulative model, which is universal).

Aristotle thinks conceptually realistically. For him, the beautiful - unlike what Hippias thought of it - can be accurately defined. Inductively, he arrives at the universal concept of “clean. Through all the searching the mind then suddenly comes to understand, as if a light suddenly appears and - a force like - illuminates the mind and provides clarity. Suddenly there is an “aha Erlebnis” and one understands. Man manages to arrive at a universal abstraction and a correct understanding of 'the beautiful'. It is characterized, among other things, by a kind of proportionality, an order, a happy merging and harmony.

3. Formae ante rem: The “ideative” interpretation.

With e.g. Plato, the ideationists claim that, apart from the nominal aspect (i.e. the word, the words, in one word : the term) and the abstract aspect (i.e. the “forma” or creature form, resp. universal regulatory model, in our mind), there is an ideation (process) at work. As we think word and term, together with the idea, in our minds, as we verify both, in the analysis of the reality corresponding to it (from the nominal to the real definition, that is), we come into contact, with the same mind ('nous', intellectus, mind), with the origin, the archè (that which, in our terms and ideas, governs its verifications, as its principle), which - since Plato - is called

idea or eidos, being-form ('idea'). It is the condition of possibility of both our terms and concepts and of their corresponding real structures.

Laws of nature: Claiming that only the material is real is not so obvious. This is already apparent, for example, from the existence of natural laws. Even without Newton's (1642-1727) discoveries of the laws of gravitation, or the laws of Kepler (1571-1630) which mathematically determine the orbits of the planets, yes without even the existence of human beings, the fall motion will continue to occur in accordance with the formulas described by Newton and the planets will continuously orbit in elliptical orbits. They are called, among other things, with St. Augustine, also called "archai," principia, principles, for they govern, as models of knowledge and thought and, above all, action, the cosmos of creation.

The question arose from ancient times, "How is it that the data themselves are in themselves a know-and-think content - a forma?" This forma is given in advance: not we put it in the data or things. Nay: the reality encountered is itself in itself knowable and thinkable.

The answer to that question is, "A forma 'pre-existing' to the data itself must be predicated." That then is the forma ante rem.

Light Metaphysics. Going deeper into it. In the Pythagorean - Platonic interpretations, being forms are like a light. They illuminate, in our concepts and terms, the things, to which these concepts and terms refer. In the data themselves, extramentally, they are a kind of "light," i.e. a built-in illumination, through which one can see clearly into the very structure of those data. Seen from a creative (organizing) supreme being, they are 'from on high' illumination. Because God, in creating our souls, builds in these forms of being, in our souls, we, in our minds, are illuminated. Which is already gradually coming through in Platonism.

The permanent presence of that light within us, on the contrary, makes it possible to know things. Something within us is essentially equal to what is outside us. It is expressed in the ancient maxim: "To know the equal by means of the equal" (Lat. : 'Similia similibus'). "The soul is, in some sense, all being" ("Anima quodammodo est omnia") S.Thomas Aquinas (1225/1274), the top figure of highscholasticism (1200/1300), would imitate Aristotle.

Where the nominalist sees a gulf, a separation that cannot or hardly be bridged, between himself and things, this does not exist for the conceptualist, or to a much lesser degree. Where the nominalist says that the essence of reality is unknowable, the conceptualist believes that

reality is, at least in part, knowable. In other words, man is capable of coming to objective knowledge of (a part of) reality and thus also to truth, to knowledge of “the things that do not lie.

The expression “Each his or her truth” is therefore a variant of Protagoras statement, “The (individual) man is the measure of all things,” and betrays a nominalist, not a conceptualist view of reality. Expressed with a dose of humor : for the nominalist, only individual beautiful girls exist. The conceptualist, however, says: “As long as, too, there will exist not only beautiful girls, but beauty as a common property.” To put it model theoretically: as long as there are examples, one will arrive at “the rule” via generalization. Or still: as long as there are applicative models, one will be able to conclude, to a single regulative model.

Ideology. Plato of Athens is the founder of the theory of ideas. Ideas are for him objectively existing, they possess an objective structure, outside the interiority of man's individual consciousness, in a separate and transcendental world. We already illustrated this with the idea “narcissus” (9.3). All earthly things are thus constructed after a transcendent and eternal model or paragon. This model also gives the distinguished things their fine material power, so that the things existing in the world become a reflection of this paragon. Ideas are like paragons of all possible specimens, and pre-existent to them “pre-existent,” “ante rem. It is therefore not surprising that they are, in Plato's interpretation, “divine,” and opposed to “mortal. “If ye, ever, behold that idea, then gold and splendor, as well as the most beautiful knaves and youths, will appear to you as a nothing.” Thus Plato's own words”.

O. Willmann, *Gesch. d. Idealismus*, I, 382, says of the idea: “In the face of the perpetually changeable, the idea is the real being; in the face of the impermanent, it is eternal; in the face of the mingled forms, it is the pure, the unmixed form; in the face of the many (of the applicative models), it is the one (of the regulative model valid for all possible applicative models).

The allegory of the cave. Among other things, in the allegory of the cave, Plato tried to clarify that this world is only a depiction of the “ideal” and more perfect transcendental world: In a cave there are prisoners, who are so shackled that they can only see the back wall of the cave. At the entrance to the cave a fire burns. Between the fire and the prisoners there is a wall, along which people walk carrying all kinds of objects. The prisoners see you on the back wall of the cave nothing but the shadows of themselves and of the objects, which are carried past. If these prisoners have never seen anything else, how could they know that these shadows are not the true reality. Now if someone unties a prisoner and turns him around so that he looks into

the light, would this prisoner take what he now perceives to be more true than the shadows he first saw? No doubt not, for his eyes would not be able to bear the light and he would prefer to return to the cave. If, on the other hand, one now brings the prisoner out of the cave so that he enters the full light, it is clear that the light is too strong for him and he will see nothing. If one wants to make it possible for the prisoner to see the real world, one will have to gradually get him used to it. As long as this is not the case, he will keep the shadows for the real world.

Truth. Three definitions of truth answer to this. 'Objective' truth consists in the fact that the data themselves are knowable, thinkable and properly treatable: it is as if they respond to a pre-given knowing and thinking that makes them what they are. In this well-defined sense, antiquity and scholasticism says that things (data) are themselves 'true' in themselves.

The logical and practical truth is that our knowing and our behavior conform to the data and their forma. Thus, the same tradition says that our judgment is "true" and our behavior is "a true (as it should be) behavior" appropriate to the data.

Pre-existing truth.- From ancient times, objective truth has been declared by virtue of an 'agency' - understand: a being or beings - which gives the data their forma or creates them. Thanks to the influence of that agency, the data are themselves "true," i.e. responding to a pre-given thought. In the biblical tradition, it is God who gives the data their existence and immediately their forma or being: he is the creating agency.

O. Willmann, o.c., says that nominalism pays unilateral attention to the forma "after" things, while Aristotelian realism pays attention to the forma "in" and "after" things and Platonic realism pays unilateral attention to the forma "before" things. He summarizes, "Scholastic realism recognizes all three." He adds that such realism is simultaneously a theory of ideas insofar as the forma 'before' and 'in' things is recognized. Indeed, the 'idea' is the forma for and in things (which is Platonic heritage).

Hegel. Who captured these three aspects of reality excellently is Hegel but he bestows on (modern) consciousness a notable role in it. Thus G. Bolland says, Hrsg., *Hegel's kleine Logik*, Leiden, 1899, 39: "When one says that thought as objective thought is the interior of the world, this may give the appearance that one thereby ascribes consciousness to the things of nature. (...) We would speak of nature as a system of unconscious thought. (...) Instead of the expression "thought," therefore, in order to avoid misunderstanding, it is better to say "thought

determination. What is logical, therefore, belongs to be looked up as a system of unconscious thought”. One can see: Hegelian thinking is the forma, the thought determination, thinking or, as it is still said, “thinking the objective idea,” i.e. paying attention to the idea in the data itself.

10.3 Logos

The term “logos” means knowledge content that has taken shape through thoughtful ordering. This thinking ordering brings multiplicity to unity. The logos is the steering principle that governs all being and operates in it, a pre-existing wisdom of the universe. The logos makes logical understanding possible for man and indicates the “reason” through which what is discussed exists. Seen from the light metaphysics, the logos is the true light that illuminates every human being, it is the forma “for” the data, the “formae ante rem,” which is realized 'in' things and to our minds allows them to be grasped and expressed 'after' things. The logos realizes the “ideas” in the Platonic sense of the word.

According to M.A. Bailly, *Dict. grec-français*, Paris, 1903-4, 1200s., the ancient Greek word “logos” two main meanings: 1. word and 2. reason, both spread over a whole bunch of meanings, too numerous to be listed here.

W. Brugger, Hrsg., *Philosophisches Wörterbuch*, Freiburg, 1961-8, 186f, distinguishes a whole set of meanings of philosophical importance. We outline them briefly.

- 1.1. Inner word (which we mumble when we are thinking or thinking).
- 1.2. External - carried by the inner word - word (e.g., meaningful utterance).
2. Reason (justification) for the thought or utterance.
- 3.1. Which in itself is justifiable (“rational”).
- 3.2. What is justifiable (“rational” and therefore logical) in our thinking.

Now follow the variants of a whole reality (“being” that provides a place for “all being”) encompassing meaning.

4.1. The rational in all reality itself (so with Herakleitos of Ephesus (-535/-465) and the later Stoics (from -300 on)).

4.2. The cosmic soul or cosmic spirit (so from Anaximenes of Miletus (-588/-524); also in the later vitalisms (F.W. Schelling (1775/1854), the later M. Scheler (1874/1928); Stoicism postulates a cosmic speech).

4.3. Philo the Jew (-13/+50), half Biblical, half pagan (theosophical), posits a “Logos,” a personal but God-subordinate mediator who contains God's ideas within himself and through whom God acts creatively.

4.4. The apostle John in the preface to his gospel labels Jesus as “Logos” or universe wisdom in a purely Biblical sense.

Since M. Heidegger (1889/1976), who emphasized the distinction between “being” and “the being,” and especially J. Derrida (1930/2004), the term “logocentrism” has been prevalent, in the sense of “the centrality of the logos” in Western thought.

For Derrida, including in his philosophies, the West is too “logocentric. The West, he believes, puts reasoning thinking too much first. In its place, he wants a reduction of traditional Western ontology and of Western thought as a whole. Where Western ontology seeks to justify universally valid statements, Derrida wants to deconstruct it. This is “deconstruction. “This brings us to postmodernism, which subjects the entire rationalist tradition, the metaphysics of antiquity and the Middle Ages, and modern nominalism, to a foundational examination.

M. Müller / A. Halder, *Kleines philosophisches Wörterbuch*, Basel / Freiburg / Wien, 1959, 100f., outlines logocentrism as follows. The proper theme of philosophizing is “being” (understand: the whole of reality). All “being,” i.e. all that is (once was, now is, ever will be), have their being-defining place and meaning in “being” which serves as the comprehensive configuration. That configuration is rational and logical. It makes all that we encounter concerning realities “make sense” rationally, accountably. That the two - being or the whole of reality and the rational in it - are connected, is decisive for the whole of Western philosophizing from the oldest Greek thinkers to the present, albeit in a multitude of variants. That very thing is called “logocentrism. In short: there is no reality without being rational in itself.

When there is philosophizing, it is as an attempt to represent that conjunction of being and rationality (or is the latter called 'logos') in our limited world of concepts. One can also broaden the term 'logical' to 'rational' and say, “All that is, is logical.” That is Western logocentrism.

Note: When the medieval scholastics say that there is 'forma' (understand: 'logos') 'before' and 'in' things (understand: the being) and that we in our minds grasp that 'forma' and articulate it 'after' things, they are articulating their logocentrism. Formal logic thus shows its logocentrism because it is precisely the logic of the 'forma' or the 'logos'.

10. 4 The being and the non-being

“Existence / essence” and “material object / formal objects”

Bibl. st.: J. Mercier, *Logique*, Louvain / Paris, 1922-7, 108 talks about the two most striking precisions concerning the conceptual content of “being” (reality).

(a) The pair “existence (actual being) / essence (mode of being).” Ontology hinges on the twofold question, “How actual is something?” (existence) and “How is it actual?” (essence). All that man does or thinks, all but begins - explicitly or not - with that single yet dual question. Science in particular stands or falls with it. Ontology is thus the substrate of life. Only if something actually exists and immediately has its own mode of being can man move forward with that something.

(b) The couple “material object/formal objects”. Anything that is anything is susceptible to more than one mode of approach. This is called, among other things, “the perspectivity of being.” Scholasticism - by giving the couple names - made explicit what had always been basic fact since Plato (think of his dialogic induction that develops a plurality of “opinions” after one theme) and Aristotle. Being, moreover, as “in itself” is essentially “material fact.” Only if it enters the field of vision of some being does it become unfailingly “formal object.” Mayflowers are in themselves a natural phenomenon but as soon as a human being smells them e.g., the same mayflowers become “fragrant flowers.” Is that same human looking for flowers for a smeller, they “are” “smelling flowers. Does a biologist fall on them, they become “research material. The one material object “mayflower” thus has a multitude of formal objects: fragrant flowers, smelling material, research material....

Being denied. Mercier distinguishes - without claiming completeness - four types.

- **1. Correlative.** “The mother is not the daughter”. “The ruler is not the slave”. The opposites are reciprocal terms: within the same nexus they do not exist without each other.

- **2. Counterfactual.** “Rainbow red is not rainbow violet but neither is rainbow yellow or rainbow blue. Contraries are joint terms within the same differential (series) given their relationship, they do not exist without each other.

- **3. Contradictory.** Did the preceding selves however opposite hang together, within the contradiction there is only a pseudo-relationship (within thinking and speaking about them but not in reality). “Something cannot be and not be at the same time. The opposites are only the inner or outer words in which they come up for discussion. For opposite “being” is “nothing” and namely the “absolute or utter nothing” which is utter or absolute nothingness (pure abyss). Actually, there is no opposition!

Note D. Nauta, *Logic and Model*, Bussum, 1970, 27v., defines “In proof from incongruity, one starts from the assumption that there exists a counter-model (an example or 'instance') that 'satisfies the data (GG) but 'does not' satisfy the requested (GV). In a systematic way, one then shows that such' a counter-model cannot exist because it involves an incongruity.” In other words, the applied contradiction axiom.

- **4. Privative.** “The blind does not see”. “That is insufficient.” “Such a thing is far from ideal”. Consistency is the relationship between what is normal (desirable, obligatory, ideal), and what it is not. Between what should (belong to) be, and what in fact is. Deprivation of something that belongs to some whole is expressed in such opposition. A disappointed value judgment expresses itself in such being denied. It is the language of frustration!

Conclusion. The partial term “not” (“far from”) can salvage all sorts of meanings.

10. 5 Being(s) and becoming(s)

We now want to explain in a very concrete way the ontological concept of “being” and “being. The first very frequent misunderstanding is expressed, among other things, in a sentence such as “Becoming is not yet being.” Such language, while understandable, is not ontological. We specify.

Indeed, one does not confuse “being(de) without more” and “non-being(de).” The latter is only one type of being(de) while the former is the general (transcendental) concept. What becomes is “something” and thus being(de) is only a becoming something.

Platonism. Bibl. st.: L. Brisson / J-Fr. Pradeau, *Plato*, in: J-P. Zarader, coörd., *Le vocabulaire des philosophes*, I (*De l'Antiquité à la Renaissance*), Paris, 2002, 79/81 (Forme intelligible: eidos, idea). The term “eidos” or “idea” (Plato uses the two) does not designate what has been called “idea” since the end of the Middle Ages because in the modern sense “idea” is a product of the human mind. In Greek antiquity and the Middle Ages, 'eidos' or 'idea', Dutchized into 'idea,' means a forma, a knowledge and thought content, objectively present

outside the human mind. A model. When in spring the snowdrops (cfr. 9.3. narcissus) emerge white from the ground and blossom, it appears that - except for deviations which material nature always shows (that is why it is “only material”) - they all show one and the same basic form and one and the same course. That same basic form, by which they are distinguishable from the rest of nature and even from the whole of reality in past, present and future and can be biologically described, is Platonically their “idea. That is why proposers of the article translate in the dictionary by “forme intelligible.”

Knowing and thinking basic form. Plato distinguishes in the human soul one aspect of knowingness, 'nous' , Latin: intellectus, spirit. That aspect is capable of discerning the idea 'snowdrop' in and through the individual, changeable snowdrops. We do say “discern,” because for Plato the intellectual grasp of the basic form of a multitude (collection) of sensory data is a kind of “seeing with difficulty.

The immutable being(s). For Plato, that is precisely the object of real knowing, which he calls “science. The changing being(s) is there but it escapes the grasp of our intellect.

Share. In and through the changing many, our mind 'discerns' the one, all specimens summarizing basic form or idea. This is possible because the changing many exhibits a 'share' in the unchanging paragon or idea. One usually translates 'share' by 'participation' (according to the Greek term 'methexis', Lat. participatio). With good reason, proposers emphasize that for Plato the unchanging are(de) is the basis of his ontology (which fiercely emphasizes all that is unchanging), as well as of his theory of knowledge: our mind or intellect discerns - amidst the confusions of our sense-perceivable living world - the ideal in and above things and their processes ('becoming').

With equal justification, proposers underscore that for Plato, being(the) unchangeable is the basis of his ethics. Conscientious behavior among the citizen of the time could not be based on tradition alone or even less on arbitrary agreements, though such reasons for behavior are not 'nothing' in Plato's eyes. But such reasons of behaving are merely “opinions” that do not or too little capture the idea. There is an objective, ideal and at once 'ideal' order of ideas, - order that escapes the unpredictable vagaries of traditions or conventions, - order of things that represents an unchanging, universally valid stability.

Conclusion. For Plato too, “being” and “being” are both changeable being and being, and immutable being and being but with an emphasis, reminiscent of Parmenides and the eleatic school, on the immutable, the ideal and ideal, in our confused and confusing sensory environment. In other words, Plato 's ontology respects the general or transcendental concept.

10. 6 Non-ontological language regarding his(the)

We continue our language research.

Symbol Theory. One can hear it: “Symbols are not reality.” Good: in the intention of symbol theorists, this means that without semantic and pragmatic interpretation, symbols - mathematical, logistic - are purely syntactic 'signs'. Ontologically, however, a sign, even if so 'empty' (semantically and pragmatically), is a being. If not, it could not even black out paper and be amenable to reasoned operations.

Literatological. Literature has two salient uses of language on the subject.

a. “A utopia is not a reality.” Since Thomas More (1478/1535, English humanist) wrote his book *Utopia* (1516), the term denotes a type of texts that describe an invented - past, present, future - reality, rather often an idealized society. In “*Utopia*,” More describes a non-existent ideal state with socialist traits. In doing so, he wanted to oppose the political and economic policies of England at the time. Ontologically, a utopia is a being and therefore reality. Otherwise it would not blacken paper and exert - sometimes very great - influence.

b. “Science fiction is not reality”. Call that utopias but preferably in a subject-scientific and technical language that makes them especially captivating to intellectuals. Indeed: beyond its text - as before utopia - nothing answers to it in extra-textual reality. At least for the time being. Ontologically, science fiction is its own type of being!

Psychological. Two notable types here as well.

a. Onirological: “A dream is not a reality.” In everyday language this phrase is frequent. In everyday reality, the dream - there are many types of dreams - is usually not much that corresponds to it. Ontologically, however, the dream, if only as pure inner day or night experience, is. If not, one could not even tell it.

b. Psychoanalytic: S. Freud (1856/1939) is the founder of a type of depth psychology, namely psychoanalysis. He distinguishes in man the pair “Es / Ich” (“It / I”). The “Es” is the

set of primal drives (not to be understood as “instincts”) - strongly controlled by the sex drive - that is at work in our “depth” and “drives” us. One of the axioms that govern the 'Es' is the 'Lustprinzip' (lust principle): the 'Es' wants to experience lust again and again.

The 'Ich', i.e. our conscious life has a number of forms: pre-conscious (memory), simply consciously perceiving and sensing, and behavioral rule-conscious. The latter is called the 'Ueber - Ich' by Freud. In his view, this “Ueber - Ich” pretty much encompasses the moral rules of society. In confrontation with “reality,” a conflict often arises in man between the rules of behavior imposed by the 'Ueber Ich' on the one hand, and the 'Lustprinzip' on the other. The latter cannot indulge itself as it would wish, e.g. already because it then comes into conflict with the norms of society. Man must therefore adapt himself to the reality of everyday life. Freud calls this the axiom of the 'Realitätsprinzip'. Ontologically, it is clear: the lust principle, however unreal regarding need satisfaction, is reality principle because it 'wants' primarily one type of being, i.e. lust experiences while the 'reality' of the 'Realitätsprinzip' means being as disappointing being.

Conclusion. It should be clear by now that ontology has its own language regarding “reality. Aristotle said that ontology looks at “being as being.” “As being” means “insofar as being is being” (and not something else). The proper identity of being is the object of what he called “first philosophy.” So one does not confuse non-ontological linguistics with other linguistics.

10. 7 Information (existential and essential)

The concept of information, although primarily a communication concept, plays a logical role. In this sense it is a variant of the basic logical concept of 'forma' (fact): it is a forma insofar as it provides insight. Thus in judgment. “This flower is orange” says of this flower that it is orange. In other words, 'orange' (saying) provides information regarding “this flower” (subject). Thus in reasoning. “If all the flowers of this bush are orange and this flower comes from this bush, then this flower is orange.” The final saying “then this flower is orange” provides information about “this flower” insofar as “coming from this bush.” The central fact of natural logic, namely the derivation (inference) is essentially informative, i.e. providing insight. Natural reason reasons precisely in order to “inquire” about a fact, a forma, i.e. to be informed thanks to new forma. Note: in the term “in-forma-tion” there is “forma” at its core.

Types. We now consider two main types of information.

1. Existence / essence. That God exists is existential information but in itself says nothing concerning his essence (beingness). What God is is thereby neither said nor communicated. With an essential information - such as e.g. "God as a creative supreme being" - it is not yet said that he exists, because from "God as a creative supreme being" in himself it cannot be strictly logically deduced that he exists.

Coincidence. - It is sometimes said that the concept of chance is made scientifically comprehensible by calculating probability. This implies that if one can say how many times out of e.g. one hundred cases something happens by chance, one thereby acquires scientific information about the concept of 'chance'. That is true if one restricts "information" to existential information but does not apply to essential information. What coincidence is, its mode of being, is thus at best assumed but not articulated. Cybernetics which, thanks to feedback, corrects accidental deviations from a course, provides information about fighting chance. Yet from fighting chance one does not deduce the essence of chance. Now, chance exists if from a course, a deviation from that course is not logically deducible. But cybernetics does not talk about that, it talks about restoring chance. It assumes the fact (existential information), but evades the essence (essential information) as assumed known.

2. Similarity / consistency. Often these concepts are logically confused. From the fact that one can scientifically influence consciousness - think of influences on a part of the brain - one deduces that with that information about consciousness itself is scientifically acquired. That is correct, but brain operations are related to consciousness (coherence information) but are not similar to it (similarity information). What consciousness itself is, is thus not said. It does say that it can be influenced by acting upon it through the brain. Influenceability in itself of something is not yet its essence!

Consequence. Generalization is not generalization. That two flowers are yellow provides essential information from the yellowing of one concerning the yellowing of the second. But that this flower is of this bush is coherence information (known is that there is a bush), not similarity information (unknown is what the bush is). Cohesion in itself involves concerning what is related to it, only existential information, not essential information. From the leg of a beetle, one concludes on the basis of coherence the existence of the rest (the whole) of the beetle but not the being of the rest (the whole) of the beetle. The coherence in itself, if given (known), proves the existence of the coherent, not the mode of being.

Conclusion. Ontology studies how real something is (existence) and how real it is (essence). The two types of information are related (inseparability) but are not similar (distinguishability).

10.8. This chapter summarized:

Ontology or metaphysics talks about all that is real in the broadest sense. Logic captures and contemplates that reality. Its foundation for some philosophers is to be sought in the world of the gods, others argue that the primal ground of reality consists of a kind of tenuous substance, still others believe that at the basis of everything is a high form of wisdom. Aristotle in his search for the reasons of all that was, is, and will be, spoke of a first philosophy. For him, the coveting of wisdom came before the investigation of nature. Therefore, he spoke of a metaphysics. Logic also wants to bring up reality, the “being,” and to do so in a rigorously thoughtful way.

Throughout history, the contents of knowledge and thought, the formae, have been interpreted in more than one way.

For some, formae are no more than thought contents, designed by our consciousness and are also present only in consciousness. One speaks of a nominalist view. Others argue that the formae are present not only in our consciousness but also in the data. They point to a connection and a similarity between knower and the known. One speaks of an Aristotelian realism. Finally, still others stress that the formae do not exist only in human consciousness or things, but that they exist even before consciousness and data exist. That they are leading ideas, models, to which all that exists forms itself.

This is also how Plato saw it. The scholastics spoke of formae post rem, which amounts to a form of nominalism, of formae in re, which involves a form of abstract interpretation, and formae ante rem, in which the ideas, as Plato conceives them, come into their own. The fact that natural laws exist, independent of and pre-existing to our thinking mind, points to an objective order, to coherence and similarity, in the whole of reality. Our mind grasps formae, thanks to a light that illuminates, that brings us to understanding. Tradition spoke of a light metaphysics. This makes the content of knowledge ordered by thought.

This steering principle, the wisdom that governs all being, is called the 'logos.' John's gospel begins with the words “in the beginning was the logos,” this steering principle.

Therefore, simply translating this ancient Greek word 'logos' by 'word' does a great deal of damage to its original meaning.

For the conceptual realist, objective reality is, at least in part, knowable. In this he differs from e.g. the nominalist, for whom "truth" rests on human agreement. Hegel, too, saw history as the evolution of an objective idea.

Postmodernism questions this ontological of antiquity and medievality, being and the rationality of being, and seeks to subject all of this to a foundational examination.

All that is has an existence and an essence. The perspectivity of being allows one to consider things from more than one perspective.

Sides may be opposed to each other in a correlative, contraire, contradictory or privative manner.

Even becoming is already being. Even through what "becomes," our mind already discerns the unchanging being, the basic form or unchanging idea.

The ontological language in reference to "being" differs from the non - ontological: non-existent ideals, science fiction, symbols, dreams ... do not evoke too much of reality in ordinary life, yet they all represent ontological reality.

The term "information" also plays a logical role, as a variant of the term "forma.

Information is richer the more it is essential in addition to existential. Coherence, however, provides only existential information, not essential.