

10.7. Elements of ontology (II)

Second year of philosophy 1997/1998

Elements of ontology

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Contents: see p. 47

Section 1 (p. 1 to 4)

Preface.-- The essential (the ‘essence’) of philosophy is traditionally speaking, ontology, reality theory, ‘being theory’. After the first year which includes introduction to phenomenology (representation of what shows itself directly as given (GG)) and to logic (reasoning discounting what does not show itself directly and is therefore requested (GV)), now comes the Second year, which introduces to general ontology and to the three great special ontologies, namely, cosmology (world or universe theory), theology (theory of religion), and psychology (theory of man). After all, we live in the world (cosmology),--a universe which -- according to the religious traditions -- includes the sacred (theology),--a universe which is our encompassing biotope or frame of life.-
- We now give the classification of the general ontology.

The essence of philosophy: ontology (metaphysics) - (02/04).

Philosophy is not a religion, work of art, ideology, life and world view of a professional scientific nature, commonsensical thinking, world and life view. The reason varies: either these things do not have omnipresent being (reality) as their object or (we think of ideology in particular) they do not account for themselves logically.--
Philosophy is thus: **a.** reality theory (all that is real as real) **b.** on a logical basis.

Ontological Understanding.- (05).

To bring up the totality of all that is, is not yet to take a point of view that is all-encompassing. That would be a -- called by ancient Greeks -- ‘divine’ -- point of view. We are in the midst of all that is, only one ‘being’ or reality and thus limited, -- finite.

The crisis of ontology.- (06/10).

It is the result of **a.** our finitude, **b.** which believes that it can expound “‘reality’” in encyclopedic systems.

Ontological system building (Aristotle, Thomas, Suarez, Wolff, Hegel, Feibleman et al.) exceeds the finiteness (finite number of axioms, samples) of our understanding of reality. It is not ontology that comes into crisis but its encyclopedic-systematic forms.

E.O. 01.1

Indeed, all those who question the ontology can only do so by means of an ontology which is their own! To claim that ontology is 'unreal' is to knowingly presuppose that one already has the real concept of reality by means of which one judges! That is judging ontology in the name of ... ontology.

The crisis of ontology in antiquity.- (11).

In ancient times, axiomatic mathematics was the natural ally of (axiomatic, i.e.) dogmatic philosophy.

All that the skeptical sages did was to blunt the boundary crossings in the logical field of the dogmatic sages.

Protosophism,-- the deconstructive philosophy of the time, had its own "dogmata" or presuppositions. Otherwise it could not take a critical stand: one who is 'critical' starts from a (higher) standpoint, understand: axiom.

The XIX-th and XX-st ' century crisis of ontology.- (12/13).

Naturalism and skepticism banish ontology (in appearance, for they have one that they unconsciously presuppose; who does anything without an understanding of what is real and unreal?). Neo-Kantian knowledge criticism (epistemology) and positivism (scientism) replace ontology by declaring as ontology one or more subject sciences that then hold "the truth."

German or "absolute" idealism radically reshapes traditional ontology based on modern subjectivism. Neo-Scholasticism, for example, actualizes tradition.

The crisis of ontology, postmodern.

One all people binding ontology is radically denied by the (extreme) postmodernists who emphasize the cultural and individual fragmentation of traditional ontology. In the process, the philosopher is essentially defined as a clarifier.

Whereby it should not be forgotten that those who interpret (hermeneutics), inevitably do so "in the name of" presuppositions concerning reality,--in the name, therefore, of an ontology!

The transcendental.

The great tradition knew - in addition to ordinary universal, private and singular - also radically universal or transcendental (all-encompassing) concepts: being(s) or reality, truth (evidential), unity (connection: likeness/coherence), goodness (value). We consider this further (16/33).

E.O. 01.2

1. *Ontological truth.*- (16/21).

All that is, is true.-- I.e.: is testable. Is provable.

Logical truth is the fact that the judgment corresponds to the reality about which it is pronounced.

Ethical truth is the fact that behavior in conscience corresponds to the proper (duty, prohibition, permission).

Note -- 'True' can also mean -- in a Platonic sense -- 'ideal': "The true man is the conscientious man" (i.e., "The ideal man...").

Note -- The subjectivist, evidentialist, relationalist, and voluntarist theories are samples concerning truth.

Aristotle's evidentiary postulate. - (18/19).

'Evidence', with Aristotle, is to be understood phenomenologically: that which shows itself directly.

Aristotle knows very well that there are deceptive evidences. For that, he did not need Euboulides' strident reasoning. His teacher Platon insisted enough on "being distinct from real being" ("to ontos on").

'True' propositions, with Aristotle, are 'given' propositions and 'reality' with him is all that is anyway. Beth understands Aristotelian 'realism' non-ontologically.

The paradox of the liar. - (20/21).

The language of a liar is characterized by a meta-language over his own (meta-language he knows if he is lying; linguistically he says what he wants to say).

2. -- *Ontological unity.* - (22).

Mathematics and logic stand or fall with this type of 'unity', i.e. relation (relation, viz. similarity (set)/coherence (system)).-- This was discussed very extensively last year, in Logic.

3. - *Ontological "goodness"*. - (23/33).

Axiology (value theory) stands or falls on the ontological concept of value. All that is, is anyway, 'good' (valuable, amenable to value judgments).

Moral good refers to life or behavior that is values-oriented.

Conscientious behavior is such that the given being comes into its own in our behavior as it demanded.

Moral law is not a natural law. Moral law is not a positive law (which can be a part of it). Moral relativism, if real, is contradictory to the identity axiom ("All that is, is"). The relativist, however, does pay attention to the boundary violations that dogmatic (axiomatic) moralists commit by falsely generalizing.

E.O. 01.3

Philosophy of law. - (31/33).

Right is a component of moral or conscientious “good. “Right to something” is right of disposition. No duties without rights: whoever has something as a duty (demanded, given up) is empowered to dispose of all that makes the accomplishment of the duty possible. Enforceability is in it.

Natural law differs from positive law. The latter is rooted in the former.-- The concept of justice: legal, -- distributive and exchange justice.-- Legal positivism is the relativism on law: in its generality it is untenable; as a critique it exposes false generalizations of natural law.

Note -- Platonic ontology. - (34/46).-- The main purpose of this added chapter is to expose the concept of idea (idea/ eidos). After all, very often -- all too often -- one confuses our human concepts or conceptions (representations) in our very limited minds with Platon’s objective ideas.

In other words: while platonic ideas are objective, at work in the realities themselves (note: not merely present but actively present), our human concepts are first of all subjective i.e. realities insofar as they are present in our minds.

Theoria.-- Theoria differs from our modern concept of ‘theory’ (mind construction concerning reality). When someone sees the given and the asked with his mind, then he is doing theoria. When he accomplishes (solves) the task with its two aspects, then his theoria is complete.

Hence the Latins translated theoria by ‘speculatio’, to spy, to examine very attentively in order to know what one is dealing with. Observe in the sense of “attentively checking and following”.

Note -- In the course of the coming chapters, a Platonic thinker will regularly speak. Not that we engage in reprimination., i.e. of returning with nostalgia to a past way of thinking. But that we want to remind those studying in the course that for centuries there has been a great tradition of Platonism which has inspired, above all ... a number of biblically oriented thinkers (“The ideas are God’s ideas”). Inspiration that still proves fruitful: weren’t the creators of logistics primarily Platonists?

E.O. 02.

Section 2 (2/48)

The essence of philosophy: ontology (metaphysics).

General philosophy is fundamentally general ontology or reality theory. For the “onto-” in the term “ontology” (introduced by the Cartesian Joh. Clauberg (1622/1665)) means “being”, i.e. reality. -- Let us first define negative (what philosophy as ontology is not), then positive (what it is).

1.1.-- *Philosophy is not a religion.*

Religion is definable as “the paying attention, with adoring reverence, to all that is external and supernatural, namely the sacred or sacred.”

Mythology, whether or not as a political, i.e. theology governing the society in which a religion prevails, was in fact the first form of philo.sophia, wisdom, as our ancestors translated it. Wisdom’ was the grasping and rightly responding to what was given and asked in the (co)life of primitive humanity. Now we interpret this as a pre-scientific and pre-wise stage of ‘thinking’ as we understand it today. At the most religion as wisdom is proto-scientific or proto-scholarly (i.e. a run-up to and a first form of science and philosophy).

Not surprisingly, sciences and philosophical thought sprang from religions.

1.2.-- *Philosophy is not an art.*

Here we think e.g. of the *Divina commedia* by *Dante Alighieri* (1265/1321), a work that poetically depicts in a medieval-scholastic sense a journey through the underworld, earth and heaven. There is a whole philosophy and ontology in it but the *Divina commedia* is not philosophy.-

Think here also e.g. of *Joh. W. Goethe* (1749/ 1832), *On German architecture*: in it he praises the Gothic cathedral and analyzes its life and worldview background.-- A cathedral is a philosophy turned to stone but it is not really philosophy.

1.3.-- *Philosophy is not an ideology.*

An ideology constructs a view of life and the world for rhetorical purposes, i.e. to persuade fellow men. There is a philosophy in every -- somewhat elaborate -- ideology but because of the lack of rigorous logical proof it is not a philosophy.

1.4.-- *Philosophy is also not the life and world view*

which rises from the positive or stellar sciences as a kind of philosophical view of life and the world.--

E.O. 03

This form of philosophizing is nevertheless very widespread: after all, the appearance of working in a purely scientific manner clings to such scientism ('scientia', Latin for 'science'). There is indeed a kind of philosophy in one or in several together or in all sciences together. But in view of the restricted nature of the methods of the professional sciences it can never really be ontology since ontology concentrates not on one or other fact from the universe as experienced scientifically by me,--not even on the totality of all domains to which all sciences together apply themselves, but on all that is simply real, i.e. not something but something,--called 'being(de)' in the ancient Greek tradition.

1.5.-- Philosophy is not commons thinking.

Claude Buffier, Traité des premières vérités, (Treaty of the first truths), Paris, 1717,-
- later *Thomas Reid (1710/1796, An Inquiry into the Human Mind on the Principles of Common Sense (1764)* founded the philosophy of the common (do not confuse with the common) mind, i.e., those insights which in principle all human beings share,-- beyond all professional science and philosophy in the strict sense.

In fact, the commonsensists reacted against "le sens intime," i.e., individual consciousness as the starting point of all science and philosophy as advocated by Descartes and the Cartesians. For the commonsensist, consciousness is from the outset common, shared by all people who possess a minimum of reason. Thus they contrasted le sens intime, le sens commun.

The method is also valid: many thinkers begin their explanations with what the common sense (of which the precipitate can be found, for example, in an explanatory dictionary) says about the matter. But relying solely on that and thus committing commonsense in an exclusive sense is untenable.

As an aside: The existential way of thinking is actually not that far removed from the commonsense philosophy in that it is based on existing, i.e. being in the world as a human being. Just as being human is there even before science or philosophy is done.

But most of the existentialists do not stop there and enter the sometimes very distant from everyday existentialism strictly philosophical (and even scientific) domain.

E.O. 04

1.6.-- *Philosophy is not a world and life view.*

In every world- and philosophy of life there is a philosophy and vice versa. Philosophy, however, wants accountability regarding world- and life-views. Indeed: ontology develops a method. This is a coupling of:

1.-- *Phenomenology*, i.e. the representation of the given, i.e. the phenomenon, i.e. what shows itself however as also as an object of direct knowledge,

2.-- *Logic*, i.e., the transcending by reasoning (deduction and reduction) of the given toward the asked or sought, by reasoning demonstrating what is knowable through indirect knowledge. In other words: ontology brings up being or reality

1.-- reality given, and

2.-- reality not given but sought or asked for.

Well, there are methods for both phenomenology so conceived and logic so conceived.

As an aside, we explained these more fully in the Logic course (which begins with a brief definition of phenomenology).

Ontology-- In his *Metaphysica* (1646), *Joh. Clauberg* says that ‘ontologia’ is “‘a kind of science that dwells on being as being’”. This is literally Aristotle’s definition. Reality as reality, i.e. insofar as reality is ‘reality’.

Clauberg: “‘Being is a natura (*note* : something) peculiar to all and any separate being.’” Now we say that the concept of reality or being is all-encompassing, transcendental. Every something in itself and all beings together are characterized by the fact that they are not nothing.-- Such a science Clauberg calls ‘*catholica*’ or ‘*universalis*’, general.

Philosophy is thus:

- a.** a set or collection of insights (informations),
- b.** preferably worked out into a system, i.e. a contradiction-free coherence (which will prove more of an ideal than a realization),
- c.** as tested or testable as possible (phenomenological and logical),
- d.** concerning the overall or total reality or his(her) as such,
- e.** divisible into portions, special ontologies, which, within the totality of reality, raise some domain (language, universe, God, human soul, morals, etc.).

E.O. 05

Ontological understanding.

From Archytas of Taras (-445 / -395; paleopythagorean), a fragment has been preserved that suggests to us what metaphysics could and especially would be.

“If someone were able to reduce all ‘genea’, classes (concepts) to one and the same ‘archä’, presupposed reality, and to deduce (‘suntheinai’, deductive deduction) and join (‘sun.arth.mèsasthai’), then such a person would - so it seems to me - come across as the wisest and immediately as possessing all truth and a viewpoint from which he can know ‘god’ (*note*: in the antique-Greek sense) and all things as ‘god’ has put them together according to pairs of opposites (‘sustoichiai’), and orders (‘taxei’).

Archytas already works here with the concepts of ‘analysis’ (reductive reasoning) and ‘synthesis’ (deductive reasoning) in the context of what ancient Greeks called ‘stoicheiosis’ (lat.: elementatio), orderliness.

Note -- Archytas presupposes a higher position.-- This is reminiscent of *L. van Tuijl*, intr. / transl., *Poe, Lacan, Derrida, The Stolen Letter*, Amsterdam, 1989.

Edg. A. Poe (1809/1849; American writer) whose life ended on a delirium tremens, wrote *The purloined letter*, a short story.

J. Lacan (1901/1981, American psychiatrist who reinterpreted Freudian psychoanalysis structuralistically (paying attention to the un(der)conscious structures), gave in 1955 a lecture on Poe’s story that has become notorious, in which he clarified on the basis of the story (model) the situation and the work of the psychoanalyst (original). Later he even included the text in his *écrits*, Paris, Seuil, 1966.

J. Derrida the deconstructionist, subjects Lacan’s text to a “deconstruction” (“déconstruction”) some twenty years later. How so? He imputes dogmatism to Lacan: like the sleuth Dupin, in Poe’s story, Lacan occupies a superior position. As if he stood above and beyond, the episodes and complications of the story, he knows concerning everything “the truth”! To which Derrida: what Dupin and Lacan do possess is “the truth which is theirs”. Which they, however,--above all involvement in the event (drama, psychoanalysis) sell as the final truth without question. With pretension.

Fortunately, it was only a wishful thinking in Archytas’ text: “If anyone were able to ...”

E.O. 06

The crisis of metaphysics (ontology).

The ontology has as its object the totality of all that is, insofar as it is. Being as being.

Thanks to phenomenology, which accurately represents the manifest part of all that is (the given), and logic, which achieves the non-manifest part of all that is by deduction and reduction (the demanded in the sense of what is not manifest but must be demonstrated), ontology uncovers reality.

We do say reality and not reality.

a. For we do have a view of the totality of being in our all-encompassing concepts (being,-- truth, unity (connection), goodness (value)). These transcendental concepts; (reality and main properties of reality) are a light that illuminates us in the midst of a massive, and massive darkness, (which is the core of light metaphysics)

b. But our limited insights, and perceptions make us:

- 1.** about insufficient presuppositions (axioms) and
- 2.** have only samples (generalizing and 'whole-izing') available. The available axioms (explanations) are finite in number and our inductive samples are finite in domain.

Consequence.--The ontology is in a constant crisis! Our transcendental notions are 'filled up' (interpreted) by non-transcendental - categorical (one also says) - contents of knowledge and thought, which are marked by the finiteness of our mind and experience.

For what we say categorically of "reality" (and its essentials), is valid only as a lemma, i.e. as a partial and very provisional interpretation.

What reality is, to begin with, is for us an 'x', an unknown, -- an original of which we seek and find models that actually never perfectly represent the original. Our models, i.e. concrete tangible data concerning reality, remain below their level. They shed a light, admittedly on all that is, but a very partial and sometimes very provisional light.

The lemmatic-analytic method, then, is the only method that ontology can actually practice, and in such a way that the lemma, the 'x', remains and will remain to a great extent an 'x', an unknown.-- That is "the crisis of metaphysics."

E.O. 07

Ontologic system construction.

Let us begin with a definition.-- 'System' or 'system' is a collection or set of things that constitute a collective understanding' i.e., that exhibit coherence (among other things, non-contradiction).

A certain structuralism has placed special emphasis on this. An ontological system is then a set of assertions that form a closed, account which aims to expound the totality of reality ('holistic' is always that) in general and especially particular metaphysics, in some encyclopedic sense. One has the impression that, in a comprehensive exposition, reality in all its aspects - certainly the most important ones - is for once explained with authority.

Platon of Athens (-427/-347).

Critics of metaphysics usually do not fail to take Platon to task. -- However:

1. he does put "all" (collection) and "whole" (system) at the center, including in the requirement not to fall into contradiction;

2. he left behind a great many texts in which no Platonist has ever been able to break down a closed system. On the contrary, Socrates' inductive method (which concludes from samples to collections) and his dialogic method (which concludes from samples to systems,--as a 'whole-isation') mean that there are fragments of a supposable system but no encyclopedic whole.

More to the point, the 'aporetic' dialogues so characteristic of Platon take inductive samples, and allow dialoguing partners to speak (the dual method) but end in no solution of the problem posed: the sought or requested remains, even after long expositions, a sought.

Systems thinkers.- Aristotle of Stageira (-384/-322; Platon's most brilliant pupil) is, in antiquity, the great systematicus with tracts that seek to expound a coherent view of life and the world at length, one might almost say: encyclopedically at length.

St. Thomas Aquinas (1224/1274; top figure of medieval Scholastic philosophy) is the author of "summae," tracts of stature that expound at length, -- encyclopedically at length, -- an entire view of life and the world (which others in the Middle Ages also did).

E.O. 08

Francis Suarez (1548/1617), the top figure of modern ('Spanish') scholasticism wrote his *Metaphysicarum disputationum tomi ii*, Salamanca, 1597. Suarez was very broadly informed and a balanced thinker who updated medieval philosophy. His influence was very great: although he was a Jesuit (since 1564), his work was used as a textbook even in Protestant universities.

Modern ontology took its enlightened-rationalist form in Chr. Wolff (1697/1754). More than two hundred works (including some forty thick volumes) make up a "Wolffian monument".

The scheme. -Theoretical philosophy: logic ("philosophia rationalis), -- ontology, -- general cosmology,-- empirical and "rational" psychology,-- natural theology,-- experimental and dogmatic (efficient and teleological) physics.

Practical philosophy: general practical philosophy,-- special practical philosophy (ethics (= morality), practical civic philosophy (home economics, politics),-- natural law.

Kant and Hegel expressed their admiration for that monument. He had extremely great influence on his period.

The modern ontology received its "German idealist" elaboration in *G. Fr. W. Hegel*.- German idealism is a philosophical monument in itself. It is situated between 1790 and 1830. It is a philosophy that identifies idea and being or reality (and in this modern sense resurrects Platonism).

Fichte, Schelling but above all Hegel are the giants of that world of thought. His *Phänomenologie des Geistes* (1807), *Logik* (1812/1816) and *Enzyklopedie* (1817) are his main works: they bear witness to an immense "system" in which all the major (and sometimes minor) aspects of "reality" ("the idea") are systematically discussed.

Did not Hegel say that, among other things, and above all because of Kant's undermining criticisms, "the bizarre spectacle has been staged in Germany that consists in a civilized people being without metaphysics, i.e. an otherwise multifaceted temple without an all-holy. Which shows that for Hegel (and the German-idealists) metaphysics occupies a central place in the overall, culture of a people insofar as it is 'civilized'.

Hegel's influence was very great, certainly until World War I (1914/1918), notwithstanding. much materialism and other metaphysical currents.

E.O. 09

Please point to *J.K. Feibleman, A System of Philosophy*, The Hague, 1963+. It is an encyclopedia! “Logic,-- ontology, Metaphysics: (*note*: some distinguish between ontology and metaphysics), -- Epistemology (*note*: theory of knowledge and science),- - Ethics, -- Aesthetics, Psychology, Politics, Sociology, Anthropology, Philosophy of Life, Philosophy of Nature, Philosophy of Language, Philosophy of Science, Cosmology, Philosophy of Law, Philosophy of Education, Philosophy of Religion”.

As one can see: the eighteen parts amount to a general (transcendental) ontology and a number of special (categorical, “regional” (says Husserl)) ontologies. How one person can cope with that is highly questionable.

It is the same with all these ‘systems’ of encyclopedic’ allure: they fill up the transcendentalia (being, -- truth, unity (connection), goodness (value)) with non-transcendental data (‘models’) that exhibit two striking traits:

- a. they testify to the person writing the tracts (his preferences b. v.”) and
- b. they testify to the culture and cultural period in which the person lives. In other words, they are and will remain samples of a finite nature.

Building structure.

G. Lernout, Postmodernism, in: *Streven* 1986 (Oct.), 33/44, touches on something fundamental: to.-- He calls this “the architectural metaphor.” Just as a pedestal - the solid ground, the ‘foundations’ or ‘bases’ - supports a statue, a building, so too in terms of insights a solid pedestal (axiomatics) supports our thinking (sciences, philosophy, rhetoric).

In doing so, the main search is for eternal, strictly provable foundations or bases (axiomata). On these, “the logical building” is then erected.

This type of thinking is now - in post-modern circles especially - dismissed as “foundation(al)ism” (also: “fundamentalism” or “integrism” or “essentialism”) whereby the term usually has a pejorative connotation of “dogmatic (understand: self-confident) thinking” that wants to reveal once and for all “the truth,” indeed, “the absolute and complete or final truth” in a series of expositions.

What - in passing - is not always true: a Hegel, for example, was well aware of the course of cultural history and its vicissitudes. Aristotle or even Thomas Aquinas, too, were aware of this.

E.O. 10.

Aristotle on the subject.

O. Willmann, *Abriss der Philosophie*, Wien, 1959-5, 453, cites from Aristotle a text that ontologically articulates the basic error of encyclopedic-systematic thinkers.

In *Peri herm.* says, Aristotle what follows: “‘Being’ (‘einai’) is not a ‘sèmeion’, kentrek (*note.*: categorical property), of something. Also: when one says ‘on’, being, (*op.*: of something) this is ‘psilon’, something empty or vain because it says nothing (*op.*: categorical) to the point. Only in connection with something else does it acquire (*note.*: categorical) meaning. Without something else (*op.*: that is categorical) the result is no concept”.

Applicable model.

Supposedly: I say of someone that he is, what do I say that applies only to that someone? Nothing! For of all that is, it can be said that it is. The term ‘being’ or reality (all that is ‘something’, non-nothing) is so general, transcendental or all-encompassing that only in connection with a non-transcendental concept does it say something of something that is not transcendental.

Thus: “‘That someone is a trustworthy person’” completes the meaningless (in categorical terms, that is) ‘is’ with the meaningless ‘a trustworthy person’.

The reverse.

By means of categorical terms - however many there may be - one can define transcendental ‘being’ in a random way but never exhaustively, for the ‘rest’ escapes every time. This is the radical finitude of all that is non-transcendental.

The system-building ontologists (some of whom we mentioned above) fill up the “‘being’” with models that are only categorical and thus samples that do globalize somewhat (approximate the whole of being) but never exhaustively define the whole of being.

In this sense -- to quote a mathematical metaphor -- “‘being’” is a limit value or limit that one approaches -- infinitely -- but never reaches.-- that is the reason for the ongoing crisis not of ontology but of ontology with exhaustive pretensions.

Conclusion. -- The so-called crisis of ontology is a phenomenon that literally drags on through time: never will finite man with his finite mind comprehend and encompass the totality of “‘all that is’” exhaustively-encyclopedically. The modern sciences also suffer in their own way from this finiteness and certainly the so-called scientific philosophy(s).

E.O. 11

The crisis of ontology in antiquity.

Beginning with terminology. -- E.W. Beth, *The Philosophy of Mathematics*, Antwerp/ Nijmegen, 1944, 89vv, defines. -- Mathematics, in antiquity, is usually the ally of dogmatic philosophy.

Beth defines “dogmatic”: not a philosophy that presupposes tenets that it considers above all criticism on the basis of a naïve trust in the human mind; but a philosophy that presupposes tenets that can withstand reasonable criticism, together with an effective method of inquiry, on which it proposes something positive.

This type of philosophy does not confine itself to criticizing basic principles, method, and human spirit. Thus, if it practices criticism, it is to be constructive.

Beth defines the counter model, the septic type.-- Traditionally, the septic has been the enemy of dogmatic philosophy (in the second sentence above). That it directs its polemic not only against “dogmatic” philosophy, but also against the “dogmatic” sciences, mathematics and the other sciences in antiquity, “is understandable” (says Beth, o.c., 81).

The method of struggle she employs against both her opponents is the same:

- a. it observes that concerning certain themes in philosophy and sciences contradictory opinions are defended
- b. it plays these opposing views off against each other.

The first ancient streak that was skeptical was protosophism (-450/-350) led by Protagoras of Abdera (-480/-410) and Gorgias of Leontini (-480/-375).

In addition to their view of the contradictions of established thinkers (the pre-Socratics), factors such as the prosperity after the Persian wars, the Athenian conception of democracy, and the overgrowth of rhetoric played a role in the mindset of the Sophists.

The first sophists (later in antiquity there is a deuterosophist) constituted a cultural revolution in ancient Hellas that never ceased, for after the sophists, skeptical tendencies emerged with the regularity of a clock (from -320 to +200), sometimes thoroughly influencing the other tendencies (one thinks of the later Platonic schools from Arkesilaos (-314/-240)).

E.O. 12

The XIX - th and the XX - th centuries as a crisis of ontology.

A detailed account of the crisis of metaphysics during the two most recent centuries would fill entire books.

We adhere to: *O. Willmann, Die wichtigsten philosophischen Fachausdrücke in historisch Anordnung*, Kempten/München, 1909, 101/123 (Das 19. Jahrhundert).

The decisive shock that Western thought underwent mainly because of Kant's critical philosophy necessitated some position on ontology after Kant. Willmann lists them very briefly.

1. -- *Radical elimination.*

The following strains just banish, out.

a. *Skepticism.*

In the broadest sense of that term, "skepticism" means adhering strictly to what shows itself immediately (the phenomena) but in such a way that concerning ontological insights one never attains any certainty. Thus the skeptic(s) does not doubt all being: he/she doubts what exceeds the immediately given being,-- especially the metaphysical data.-- In this sense skepticism is a phenomenism.--

b. *Naturalism.*

Naturalism is one form of skepticism because it adheres strictly to what shows itself immediately (to our senses especially), all that is, phenomenal thus, but denotes the whole of it as "a mechanistic universe." Mechanistic skepticism if you will.

2. *Replacement.*

Which amounts to a radical elimination but with the appearance of "putting something else in its place as a hold on metaphysical territory."

a. *Neo-Kantian knowledge critique.*

Kant, to put it simply, reduces 'rationalist' philosophy to what the strict limits of our sensory experiences of all kinds allow of it. Thus, Kantism reduces philosophy to a gnoseo and epistemology, knowledge and science analysis that is highly 'critical' ('criticism').

b. *Positivism (scientism).*

This XIX- d' century form of strict "empiricism" (which adheres strictly to sensory experience) substitutes philosophy for either some subject science (especially psychology (psychologism), but also biology (biologism, darwinism or evolutionism), sociology (comtism, sociologism) or even history (histori(cis)m)) or the totality of all subject sciences (scientism, positivism).

E.O. 13.

3.-- Radical refounding.

Here German idealism can be mentioned with J. G. Fichte (1762/1814), Fr. W. Schelling (1775/1854) and especially G. Fr. W. Hegel (1770/1831).

Between 1790 and 1830, a type of thinking emerged in Germany that is still seeking its match as a wealth of insights. It is Platonism in the sense that it identifies “being” and “idea”. But it is modern, post-rationalist, in that it does away with Kant and gives absolute priority to reason, a very modern idea, and interprets this reason “dialectically” (i.e., in continuous movements and counter-movements (cultural-historical)).

In any case: with Fichte, Schelling, Hegel there is again metaphysics and ontology in grandiose style.

4. -- Update.

One thinks of neo-scholasticism, which actualizes antiquity, as far as processed by medieval scholasticism - not without strong ecclesiastical influences of all kinds - in the wake, incidentally, of Spanish (modern) scholasticism.

One thinks of an Adolf Trendelenburg (1802/1872), who advocated an actualization of Aristotelian philosophy, embedded in a (romantic) organicism (conceiving of reality as more than a mere mechanistic, viz. an organismic whole). In which an R. Eucken and an O. Willmann followed him.

Such currents are not uprooted in a modern, ‘critical’ way, but remain located in a great tradition which they rethink in function of current situations. So that old, medieval and modern get their place without reprimand-tendency (i.e. without wanting to escape into a past that is no longer there).

Note -- Reference should be made to e.g. *H.-H. Holz, The topicality of metaphysics (Contributions to the history and systematics of philosophy)*, Kampen, 1991.

To begin, the author outlines the history of ontology “from Platon to Hegel.” He then turns to the criticism of that ontology (Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Dilthey, Bloch).

As causes, in XIX - th and XX - th centuries, of the crisis of ontology he mentions:
a. the professional sciences that provide an incessant flow of new information and
b. the culture revolution.

However, he defends ontology: the problems that traditional ontology addresses are still there, and they cannot simply be swept off the table.

E.O. 14

The crisis of ontology' in postmodern terms.

The XXth century continues the great tradition of criticism of ontologies. In many ways.

Do we dwell on one type provided to us by *Theo de Boer et al, Modern French Philosophers*, Kampen / Kapellen, 1993.-- The work includes eight contributions from the hand of eight collaborators at the Free University of Amsterdam.

1. *Those discussed.*

Featured are the following proposers.-- M. Foucault (1926/1984), who, following in the footsteps of G. Bataille (1897/1962; a Nietzschean) and M. Blanchot (1907/2003, debunking the book), seeks to debunk the all-encompassing concept of power (which he discovers in traditional philosophy, among other things).

J. Derrida (1930/2004), the man of 'déconstruction' who, among other things in the wake of M. Heidegger 's 'Destruktion' (the dismantling of the philosophical tradition "from Platon to Nietzsche and even later"), unmasks 'logocentrism' (reason as all-encompassing power).-

J.-Fr. Lyotard (1924/1998), the man of the definition of postmodernism (understood in a strict philosophical sense), who defines philosophy as "the great story" (about all that was, is and will be) but who criticizes every big story (think of the totality of sacred history from creation to Jesus' return in biblical philosophies and what survives of it in western philosophies, and think of the modern belief in progress of enlightened rationalists) as not valid and reduces it to "reduction of meta-tales".

Julia Kristeva (1941/ ...) and Luce Irigaray (1939/ ...), two women who unmask phallogocentrism, the claim of a philosophizing recited by mere men as normative also for women.

J. Baudrillard (1929/2007), who unmasks the claims of our current communication world as a communication of "empty" signs. What he calls dismantling of simulation culture.

Emm. Levinas (1905/1995) who, as a Bible-believing Jew, demolishes the comprehensive 'egology' (from the self of the phenomenologist thinking philosophy of Edm. Husserl (1859/1938)) with its claim to comprehensive insight into the phenomena demolishes in the name of God (Yahweh) and the other (fellow man).

P. Ricoeur (1913/2005) who is known among other things for his processing of the three great materialists as unmaskers of our culture (Marx, Nietzsche, Freud).

E.O. 15

Significance.

The critique defines the essence of the thinkers discussed as hermeneutic philosophers.

As an aside, “hermeneutics” is interpretive skill. Especially in traditional theology (biblical exegesis) and legal theory. From Schleiermacher (1768/1834) on, hermeneutics becomes a theory of knowledge and thus philosophy. Especially W. Dilthey (1833/1911) with his ‘*verstehende*’ method extended hermeneutics to all human sciences in which the understanding of one’s fellow man is central.

The authors of the book namely take as a given fact a text (of predecessors) in which they try to realise an interpretation (in ancient Greek: *hermèneia*) as requested. Woldring in the introduction of the book typifies those discussed in this way.

Yet the term postmodernism is also appropriate. For the tendencies of the French writers criticize modern philosophy with its claim to (scientifically grounded) validity concerning the totality of being (reality without more) or concerning basic aspects of our - on such a philosophy based - Western culture. Modern reason namely is criticized, - ‘unmasked’ as inadequate,-- ‘dismantled’ as too pretentious (the term ‘dismantling’ strictly fits J. Derrida).

Note -- The network metaphor.

Return to *G. Lernout, Postmodernism*, in: *Streven* 1986: Oct., 33/44.-- Lernout characterizes postmodern thinking as follows.

Just as a weaver weaves a bird’s net that floats in the air, so too those who think (post-modernly): in response to a task (given + requested), we constantly weave all kinds of world- and life-views and philosophies that come and go,-- scientific theories and models that emerge and disappear.-- separate from the reality outside us.

Floating relative to being, this type of thinking does not proceed logically in the traditional sense of “pedestal (foundations), superstructure (deductions and inductions).”

‘Logical’ in the postmodern sense is combining conceptions into a network of sometimes strange fragments.

‘Logical’ in the postmodern sense is constantly incurring changes as the reality outside us is constantly changing. With its ups and downs.

One sees it: instead of building on solid foundations, one is looking for lost (because dismantled) foundations of our Western culture.

E.O. 16

Truth. - Ontological and non-ontological (categorical).

Already the language of manners is on the right ontological path: don't people say "It is true"? By which they mean that it is. All that is, is true. - That is to say, "All that is, is testable. Is findable, discoverable.

This does not claim that it is in fact tested, found, encountered. It is only claimed in the ontology worthy of the name that testing, finding, encountering must be possible.

Otherwise, there is nothing, absolutely nothing. For only utter or absolute nothingness is radically 'false', for it is absolutely not! It is untraceable. Unreflectable.

It is certainly not claimed that (earthly) man tests all that is, in fact or even in potentiality, and can handle findings concerning everything. Man can handle samples in the totality of all that is, i.e. in the totality of all that is something, non-nothing.

The "logical" or judgmental truth.

This is a property peculiar to judgment insofar as it corresponds (belongs) to that which is (as it is).

One sees it, the ontological truth founds the judgment truth. In Hegelian language: a judgment is "real" (understand: corresponds to reality) insofar as it reflects reality - as accurately as possible (samples are invariably finite).

In passing: to repeat it again and again: the given or phenomenon (that which shows itself as being there) comes into its own in phenomenology, i.e. bringing up, in judgments, what shows itself directly as given;-- the not showing itself comes into its own in logic, i.e. bringing up by reasoning what is asked or sought.

In short: in phenomenological ontology, the given is the demanded and in logical-reasoning ontology, the demanded is precisely what does not show itself but must be demonstrated. Once something is demonstrated, it functions as given, of course. Thus there is constant movement in what shows itself: more and more reality shows itself.

Note -- "Ethical truth" consists in conduct (conscientious conduct) conforming to the requirements of what shows itself to the conscience as duty or prohibition or mere permissibility. Then such behavior is also "real" (in the Hegelian sense).

E.O. 17

Note -- Truth theories.

The popular man or at least also the intellectual who is not too sophisticated, say, when “it is or is so”, that “it is true”. Without any particular difficulty. But intellectuals who have drunk of the drink of sophisticated theory(s), lose themselves in all possible -- the more complicated the better -- theoretical ‘explanations’ -- of e.g. (the concept) “the truth”.

We refer to e.g. *G. Boas, An Analysis of Certain Theories of Truth*, Univ. of Calif., 1921. Steller summarizes the main theories known to him at the time as follows.

1.-- Subjectivist theories.

“All that - however it may be, e.g., because it is of use to me or, represents some utility value - is pleasant, is true” (“Logical Hedonism”).

2. -- Undeniability theories.

“All that presents itself as undeniable - e.g., propositions that make such a strong impression on our minds that we feel they are ‘undeniable’ - , is true.”

3.-- Relationship theories.

These theories put a relation at the center. - The traditional “correspondence” theory says, “All that is within the relation “object/subject” or given and mind such that it is reflected in our mind as correctly as possible, is as true as possible.”

Note -- This is called “the mirror theory” because the human mind reflects data like a mirror.

Systems theory says, “All that within the whole of our information or knowledge system does not conflict with the rest and is therefore consistent with it, is true.”

Note -- A certain structuralism (Martial Gueroult in a work on Descartes’ philosophy) applied this theory in a renewed form -- i.e., structuralist.--.

Note -- In a mathematical-logical sense, more recent theories (and there are a crowd of them) apply this theory of relations: a language (e.g. our Dutch) is reduced to well-organized sentences (perhaps propositions) and thus tested for its conception of truth.

4. -- Voluntarist theories.

Boas himself (in the spirit of Ch. Peirce) says: “All that is reflected as a sign in things (data) as a sign in our mind and by virtue of human interventions, deductively derived from those signs in the data as well as in our mind, is tested, and thereby resists reproach, is true. Which is “the pragmatic maxim” of Peirce.

E.O. 18

Aristotle's "evidentiary postulate".

Let us quote *E. W. Beth, De wijsbegeerte der wiskunde*, (The Philosophy of Mathematics.), Antwerp/ Nijmegen, 1944, 80.

Beth claims: "A characteristic of Aristotle's philosophy is the confidence in that which is taken for granted". Euboulides of Miletos (of the Megarian school) now introduces a man who also relies on obviousness and is thus tempted to make contradictory statements.

The "Electra".

"One asks someone : "Tell me, 'Do you know your father?'" He answers : "Yes". One asks further : "Now if I put a man wrapped in a sheet beside you and I ask : 'Do you know him?' What then do ye answer?". Answers "I do not know him, of course!". So, if ye know not that man, then evidently ye know not your own father".

Beth specifies what Aristotle means by axiom of evidentiality, o.c., 64. As a fifth axiom on axiomatics, Aristotle asserts, "All propositions are evidently true" and "All other propositions are deduced by logical means (i.e., by reasoning) from these propositions or at least can be deduced from them!

Beth argues that Euboulides' strictures rightly attack Aristotle's evidentiary postulate and derive a "contradiction" from it (*reductio ad absurdum*).

1.-- It is clear that Aristotle distinguishes two types of being:

a. being that shows itself and is therefore 'evident';

b. being that does not show itself and is therefore not immediately given but is made evident through reasoning (deduction of propositions from axioms; reduction (including generalization)). For the first type he applies phenomenological reduction. "Insofar as something is given, and therefore evident, it is there". For the second, he considers. Exceeding the given possible thanks to reasoning.

2.-- What does Euboulides actually do? First of all he plays with words. The term 'know' has two meanings in the 'Electra': the man 'knows' his father as every person who has ever had contact with his father knows his father. Further: he knows the man wrapped around him according to another type of 'evidentness', namely with reservation (until he can see who is wrapped in that sheet).

Thus, there is no contradiction because knowing and knowing differ and thus the evidentiality as conceived by Aristotle remains valid.

E.O. 19.

Aristotle's axiomatics.

Beth, o.c., 63v. outlines the Aristotelian theory of science. At least insofar as it has a deductive form. For Aristotle also knows - and to a very high degree - reduction (induction).

By "deductive science" Aristotle means a system *W* of propositions such that:

1. all of *W*'s propositions apply to some area or domain of 'real' objects (which means only to the ontologist that Aristotle was that no propositions or judgments are possible about absolute nothingness; i.e. : 'real' does not mean that the objects exist outside the human mind e.g.).

2. all of *W*'s propositions are "true" (where "true" as a translation of the antique Greek "alèthes" means first of all "all that shows itself" as being there),

3. if certain propositions belong to *W*, any logical inference from those propositions also belongs to *W*;

4. there is in *W* a finite number of terms provable such that

a. the meaning of these terms "needs no further explanation",

b. the meaning of all other terms found in *W* can be described using these terms alone,

5. in *W* there is a finite number of propositions such that

a. the "truth" of these propositions is evident,

b. all other propositions of *W* can be deduced from these propositions by logical means (by reasoning).

Beth's comment.

1. is the expression of platonic-aristotelian realism.

Note -- 'Reality' in ontology means "all that is however something, non-nothing". Nothing more! A dream, a mathematical or logistic symbol (sign), a feeling of lust which appears 'unreal' (in colloquial language), all that becomes, a pure fiction,-- all that is 'something', 'being', in the language of ontology (which may differ from the other languages under this point of view).

3. accounts for the deductive nature of the science type.

4 and **5** are called in antique Greek language: 'stoicheiosis', lat.: elementatio, i.e. to define totalities (collections or systems) from predefined elements. 'Defining' which in an axiomatic system is 'deducing'.

E.O. 20

The paradox of “the liar”.

It may seem unusual that, in ontology, the paradox of “the liar” (from Euboulides of Miletos) can involve decisive insight. We now attempt to specify this.

E.W. Beth, De wijsbegeerte der wiskunde, (The Philosophy of Mathematics), Antwerp / Nijmegen, 1944, 78vv., discusses at length.-- But first the text.

The question is put to a person: “If thou liest, liest. thou or speakest truth?”. If he/she answers “I lie”, then the interrogator deduces, “If thou art claiming to lie and thou art (actually) lying, then thou art speaking truth”. If, however, he/she answers “I tell truth”, then the interrogator deduces, “If you claim that you are lying and you are telling truth, then you are lying”.

Note -- In both cases, an incongruity is inferred from the interrogator’s assertion (reductio ad absurdum): if you assert it, then what you refute follows from it.

Beth to the point: -- Platon and in his wake Aristotle defined “truth” (*note:* not ontological truth but a judgmental truth) as follows: “He who believes that what does not belong together does not belong together and that what belongs together belongs together. Speaks falsehood the one who holds an opinion contrary to things”.

This definition of truth lies at the root of Euboulides’ deduction.-- Thus Beth, He specifies. The platonic-aristotelian definition presupposes the possibility of a comparison of assertion and the fact to which the assertion refers (*note:* semantic scope).-- Thus e.g.: in order to determine whether the assertion “This table is green” is actually true, I must examine whether the table in question is indeed green.

Also: in order to determine whether the statement “I lie” is either true or false, I must examine whether the speaker is lying or not. This investigation, the possibility of which is a prerequisite for the validity of Aristotle’s definition, turns out to yield “no result” - according to Beth -’:’

Note -- One sees Euboulides’ procedure: he first applies an opponent(s) theorem to a special case (applicative model) and only then shows that the theorem leads to a contradiction (reductio ad absurdum).

E.O. 21

The sentence “If ye lie, do ye lie, or do ye tell the truth?” is absolutely not a test of the reality (the things) about which lies are being told. For that would be platonic-aristotelian scrutiny.--

No: Euboulides limits himself to questioning the one who says “I lie”, as to what he meant by “I lie”. Since, by definition, someone who says of himself “I lie” only says what he wants to say, Euboulides is obliged to fantasize possible answers. We do say “possible answers” and not “the possible answers” because the one who says of himself - autoreferentially (as me also says) - “I lie” can also say nothing! This is a third possibility. This one is concealed: perhaps to suggest an “either-or” (dilemma).

Out of mania (Euboulides is a specialist in snare statements) to still be able to perform reductio ad absurdum, he does not venture into the platonic-aristotelian test but into a preliminary to only conjecture - interrogation of someone who says of himself “I lie” and so clearly says (he/she makes no mystery of it) what his saying can mean. Yet Euboulides interrogates him/her. By putting either model (I lie) or counter-model (I say truth) first, it is not difficult for him to say “If thou asserts this, it strictly follows logically what thou refutes” in the form of the two reductiones ad absurdum.

But in doing so he does not refute Platon and Aristotle whose test he does not venture. For Euboulides should have asked (or at least mentioned) the sentence which is labelled a lie by the lying or at least by the one who says of himself that he /she is lying. By not mentioning that sentence (language) it is impossible to test that sentence against the reality he was talking about when it is said about that sentence “I lie” (meta-language). That sentence which the lying autoreferentially claims is lie would have interested Platon and Aristotle. Not however does Euboulides interest himself in that unsaid sentence but - it is possible that Beth is right - insinuates a critique of the Platonic-Aristotelian definition of truth.

Conclusion.-- Euboulides tests a lying by itself, not the unsaid sentence by the “things about which that unsaid sentence spoke.”

E.O. 22

Transcendental unity theory.

“Being and the one are interchangeable.” This is how it sounds in traditional ontology. We can be brief in this regard because this unified theory is the basis of our logic. We therefore refer to it.

The first definition of number, resp. number (in which a number is expressed) is attributed to Thales of Miletos (-624/-545; first sage). It reads: “monadon sustèma”, a relation of units.

Thales’s starting point: **a.** units, **b.** a connection (of similarity: collection, or of coherence: system).

The paleopythagaeans (-550/-300) described monas, unity, ‘monad’, as “stigmè athetos”, sting (of a pointed object) without place (position in space).

We now call this “unity” (numerical), and “stigmè”, point (in the space mathematical sense), as “monas thesin achousa” a unit that occupies a position (in space).

Note -- According to Aristotle among others, the unit (monad) did not belong to the number (number) but was the constituent - stoicheion, lat.: elementum - of all numbers from two upwards.

Note -- Eukleides of Alexandria (-323/-263) spoke of “plèthos monadon” (a ‘crowd’ or ‘unit’ (bandage) of units). Previously, Eudoxos of Knidos (-406/-355) had spoken of “plèthos horismenon”, a well-defined ‘crowd’.

Note -- For more information: *Th. L. Heath, A Manual of Greek Mathematics*, New York, 1931-1; 1963-2, 38.

From monadology to henology.

As explained more fully in our Logic (first year), to which we refer, a henology, a unity theory, is the basis of antique-traditional logic. “To them”, the one, is indeed a central concept in antique ontology.

1. For there is no being (reality) that is not either singular (unique, one in number, monas) or plural (more than one in number). In other words, unity - singular or plural - is an all-encompassing or transcendental concept.

2. The doctrine of order (harmology) stands or falls on this understanding. Logic rests on it. If there was no unity (connection -similarity, coherence-), then ordering was impossible and logical thinking without foundation.

Note -- This is what traditional identity theory expresses in the terms identical/part-identical (analogous)/non-identical.

E.O. 23

The transcendental, “good(e)” (value).

The great antique-medieval ontology distinguished “being(s)” (something) “true,” one (related), and “good” (valuable) as transcendental concepts that together founded the general ontology.

‘Ontology’ fans open to ‘aletheiology’ (theory of truth), ‘henology’ (theory of order) and axiology (theory of value).-- Let us dwell on the latter.

Platon.

O. Willmann, *Geschichte des Idealismus, III (Der Idealismus der Neuzeit), (History of Idealism, III (Idealism in the Modern Era),)*, Braunschweig, 1907-2, 1036, says that the transcendentalisms constitute a set of concepts which, o.g. by a lining up of the paleopythagorean (sometimes he also says ‘eleatic’) presuppositions “the one and the true” (this is connection and turn out as testability of connection) and the Platonic postulates “the being and the good” (i.e. the real and the valuable) became clear. Cf. O. Willmann, *Abriss der Philosophie*, Wien, 1959-5, 382/388 (*Die Transzendentalien*). There Willmann says that it is the eleatic ‘speculation’ (understand: ‘theoria’, i.e. the keenly perceptive fathoming) that anticipated the series.

Transcendental “value”.

Everything that is (is) is valuable insofar as it can be tested by a sense of value. If this is not the case from any point of view, then it appears that one is dealing with “the absolute nothing”, i.e. with absolute nothingness. For the term “the absolute nothing” is merely a figure of speech, i.e. a way of saying (“so to speak” e.g. what is “absolute nothing” is “the absolute nothing”).

Here the famous examples of pure ontology return: namely, a mathematical or logistic sign (‘symbol’), a wishful thinking, an imaginary case (‘irrealis’) or a purely possible something’ (potentialis), a becoming something,-- all this is reality in the ontological sense. So it ‘is’. And it is, when confronted with value-feeling, an eventual value.

Note -- One material object or good is amenable to a plurality of formal objects or goods! Hence, value as reality in the ontological sense seems very “subjective” but is not. Think of a benefaction: one appreciates it (who benefits from it); another does not (who is envious of it).

Again: no categorical ‘good’ is ever fully a model for the transcendental ‘good’.

E.O. 24

Moral (ethical or moral) good.

One of the most frequent applications or applicative models of the transcendental good or value is the good insofar as it is recognized and practically acknowledged by conscience.

W. Goodnow Everett, Moral Values (A Study of the Principles of Conduct), London, 1920, was at the time the textbook of ethics for American students.-- Everett's major thesis is: with the concept of value all ethical issues stand or fall.

For - he says - the conscientious is not, with respect to life, a separate domain which imposes itself from outside on the other domains of life. In other words: ethics concerns life insofar as it is governed by ethical value(s).

a. *Morality, i.e.* the set of rules which expresses the morally good, has as its sense or purpose the ordering of values. The “interests” (all that concerns us when we live) which present themselves as elements within the coherence that is life, are balanced by the straight conscience.

Note -- This is a relational interpretation of the role of conscience. Life as a system of interests receives its proper distributive justice.

Applicative model.-- Suppose Monica wants to marry: she thereby posits that married life is a value (a good) insofar as it encompasses being married. This does not prevent Monica from simultaneously devoting herself to charity, which is then the same encompassing life insofar as it ‘valorizes’ fellow human beings. In this case, the relationship is inclusive: both ‘values’ - marriage and charity - include each other.

b. *Everett extends this:* all values within the one life -- economic, political,-- aesthetic,-- social etc.-into one term: all human interests must be viewed from an ethical standpoint because conscience totalizes the whole of life: as value. With all its facets.-

It is not surprising that Everett rejects, for example, hedonism, which imposes the value of pleasure within the one life, if necessary at the expense of the rest. Also rejected is the Kantian formalism that designs life unilaterally from the thinking-modern ‘I’ (subject).

E.O. 25

The foundations of ethics (moral philosophy).

In 1703, Chr. Wolff publishes his “*General Practical Philosophy*.” In 1720 he publishes his *Ethics* (morality) as part of his “*Special practical philosophy*”.

This strict mode of classification betrays Wolff’s desire to make the enlightened spirit (“die Vernunft”) - characterized by systematics and belief in progress - known to the world through his systematic work.

Note -- One can always argue about classifications. We mention Wolff’s classification very briefly to show that “practical” philosophy is more than moral philosophy. Technical-industrial action, for example, is also ‘praxis’! -- Let us now consider the axiomatics of morality.

1.-- *Ontological foundation.*

The ontology, as we conceive it, includes two basic aspects. - Insofar as it dwells on the given and the demanded (= task), i.e., the being(s) insofar as it shows itself directly and immediately (and is thus phenomenon), in order to grasp it correctly. and represent it, ontology is phenomenology.

Insofar as ontology is concerned with the answer to the demanded (= solution), i.e. the being(s) insofar as it does not show itself (is transphenomenal) but is sought (asked) but is also demonstrated, in virtue of reasoning, ontology is logic.

Applied to the foundations of morality.

Let us put it this way: If reality, in the form of given (GG) and demanded or wanted (GV), i.e. in the form of a task, is truly (“really” one could say with Hegel) reflected in our actions, then that action is morally (= moral) good or proper. If not, it is morally evil or improper.

“Act of a man and human act”

If a person falls over a stone unintentionally and by unconscious reflex remains upright, then this is a “human act” but not a “human act” (not an “actus humanus” but only an “actus hominis” as the middle age scholastics said). Well, traditionally, moral (ethical, moral, conscientious) behavior is only “human behavior,” i.e., result of insight (reason (reason and reasoning)), sensing mind, and especially freedom of will (however small these may be).

E.O. 26.

Applicable model.

Friedrich Engels (1820/1895; thinker of Karl Marx), in his *Ludwig Feuerbach und der Ausgang der klassischen deutschen Philosophie*, (Ludwig Feuerbach und der Ausgang der klassischen deutschen Philosophie), Stuttgart, 1888, 1, provides us with examples. These are taken from (his critique of) Hegel's notion of "real" and "reasonable" ("vernünftig"). In particular: in his *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts oder Naturrecht und Staatslehre*, in the preface, Hegel says: "Was vernünftig ist, das ist wirklich; und was wirklich ist, das ist vernünftig".

Correct interpretation.

The term 'wirklich' (real, i.e. what corresponds to reality) is excised from human history. Not of total reality or 'being(s)'. According to Hegel, all that people do, in the course of human (cultural) history, is 'real' if, besides being a (brutal) fact or given, it is also necessary, i.e. answering to some kind of necessity.

For example - says Engels - a government measure - e.g. a tax measure - is not automatically 'real' and 'justified'. However, only when that measure answers a need is it 'real', i.e. it does justice to a reality that presents itself as given and demanded.

Note -- This allowed Hegel -- and in his wake Marx and Engels -- to conveniently note changes in human history and, insofar as they were responsible for them themselves (they were all dialectical-revolutionary in spirit), to justify them as "logically justified" and thus "vernünftig," rational.

Thus e.g. the French monarchy, which ruled "by the grace of God" for centuries and apparently answered a need somewhere, had in 1789 (beginning of the French Revolution) "become unreal" in the context of the historical process that culture went through in France.

Note -- It is immediately becoming clear that we, in this course, can, to a great extent, agree with this view: if, at any given moment, the monarchy in France no longer satisfies the given and the demanded (by which a form of government is justified), then ethically it is no longer "good" (to be talked about) because it no longer allows the task to be done justice.

E.O. 27

The moral or ethical law of nature.

‘Law’ here means “all that is everywhere and always (synchronic and diachronic), i.e. is given.” ‘Nature’ here means “all that is present everywhere and always (syn- and diachronically). One sees the connection: if there is something that is present everywhere and always as given and demanded, then it receives the status (reality type) of natural law.

The physical (physical, physic) law of nature.

In a high mountain range a mass suddenly comes down. This happens, according to our physicists, by necessity, although for our human ‘reason’ (even in its modern stage) unpredictable. Or if one wants: the event is determined (within the framework of the general determinism that our physicists always put forward).

The moral law of nature.

Where falling rock only knows how to make good the physical law of nature, human freedom knows how to make good and not make good -- a child is generally a reality to be respected. Everywhere and always it is a duty (a necessity for good behavior) to respect such a child. Anyone who grossly deviates from this duty, thanks to a dose of leeway within which a dose of human freedom is allowed, is considered ‘perverse’, i.e. morally grossly deviant.

In other words, a moral law lays claim to human acts, not to acts of a human being (which would constitute a kind of natural law in the physical sense).

Note -- It has been attempted, over the centuries, to draw up a sort of list or axiomatism on the subject.-- What invariably recurs as a natural law of morals is: “Good is everywhere and always duty” and “Evil is everywhere and always forbidden”. Which is of course very general but of extremely singular application.

Note -- The Bible, *Exodus.20:1/18* e.g., gives a list of generally applicable duties (and rights). The first three commandments of the Decalogue (Ten Commandments) are theological (concern our attitude toward God); the last seven are creaturely (concern our attitude toward all that was created by God, i.e. ourselves and all that makes up our biotope). This vernacular list talks about “parents/children” (those in authority/ subjects), life (biological and psychological), sexuality (extra- and intra-marital), property, speaking truth.

E.O. 28.

Anyone who observes carefully will see that the first three commandments place God at the center of “thought” (meaning “inwardness” and “meanness”), word and deed (from inwardness to externalization), whereas the last seven are expressed in reverse (from deed and word to “desire”). Whereby it appears that the Bible confronts the natural law with the fundamental freedom of man (“human act”).

The moral positive (“stellar”) law.

When data and their solicited are merely private or even singular in appearance, the task being solicited shows itself as “positive” or “stellar. This is not universal.

Think of laws enacted either in full peace or in emergency situations (war, for example). A private or singular situation is not present everywhere and not always. This implies that the duties and rights which show themselves in it do not belong to the universal or general law of nature but to the purely positive or propositional law.

Authority.-- To make possible the final assessment of whether or not it is necessary (to speak with Hegel), within a group, is a layer within the group that carries authority. That authority determines--not without including the rest, the “subjects”--’ what becomes law. Or what disappears as law. That arising and perishing is typical.

Conclusion.-- And the natural law (universally valid demanded or necessity) and the positive law together make up the one law of morality.

2.-- Dissenting opinions.

In the moral good, all that is as given and demanded, comes into its own. This is the ontological foundation.

As an aside, the sensing of what is “to do” or “to leave” rests on the sensing of the identity axiom. This reads, “All that is, is.”

Applied to all that is as given-and-requested, this reads: - “All that is given-and-requested; is given-and-requested”. Therein dawns the demand or at least the impetus for conscientious action which thus begins with not lying (deceiving oneself) concerning all that is given-and-demanded as there being undeniable. As imposing itself. As unimpressive and unsuppressible.

E.O. 29.

Is “relativism” all that, anyway, questions or, anyway, detracts from that fundamental honesty in confronting being in the form of given and requested.

Relativism is a many-headed dragon. *Max Apel, Philosophisches Wörterbuch*, Berlin, 1940-2, 196, literally says, “Relativism is a state of mind that rejects all that is ‘absolute’ (*op.*: utterly imposing itself as fact and/or validity), unconditional.” The identity axiom is such that the identity of the perceived and/or thought imposes itself as unconditionally given (and requested, because the, requested is a part, of the given). Whoever is honest with the evidentiality of the given (and requested), accepts the unconditional or absolute. He who does not honestly accept what he/she establishes as being there, formally - and shamelessly - denies the absolute character of all that is as far as it is and shows itself as such.

In other words, that dishonesty belies the ontological foundation itself.

Apel, of course, distinguishes between epistemology and ethical relativism.-- His definition, however, misses one aspect, namely, that ontology falls into two aspects, namely, the phenomenological (all that shows itself as being or reality, no matter how) and the logical (all that is demonstrable from what shows itself directly by reasoning of all kinds).

When one examines the arguments of relativists, they always boil down to the fact that our knowing (reality contact) is limited, finite, inadequate.

Precisely that aspect is recognized in our theory by pointing to the partial character of phenomenology as ontology: we indeed only know directly what shows itself as a phenomenon. The rest of being or of the total reality hides itself - for the time being - from our limited mind. But that rest is somewhat accessible by means of logical transgression of the phenomena.

The induction e.g. concludes of precisely one or preferably some to all similar data. The induction as a generalization understood as the decision of precisely one part or aspect or of some parts or aspects to the whole (system, i.e. the whole comprising all parts or aspects).

Well, both the showing and the demonstrated insofar as given and thus “evident,” insofar as one pays attention, exhibit an absolute, unconditional, or utter character, even if that evidentness is open to extension.

E.O. 30.

One thinks, in this connection, of the doctrine of the Church, e.g., concerning “erroneous conscience”, i.e., an ethical insight which, although honestly dealing with the data, is nevertheless wrong and “unreal”.

But this does not include relativism. Only finitude regarding our understanding.

The subject-object relationship.

“No object without subject; no subject without object.” (Apel, o.c., 197). Behold one of many definitions of relativism.

In other words: the essence of knowing lies in that interaction.- Insofar as being shows itself only when and insofar as one pays attention to it (intentionality), that formula is correct.

A person who sleeps during an exposition simply does not hear them! His attention, one necessary but not sufficient condition, does not work: he is, not there! With the speaker and his thought-contents. -- But that does not mean that therein already lies a valid argument for relativism.

Following that subjectivist definition, Apel formulates relativism as follows: “An absolute knowledge - an absolute truth - seems impossible: our knowledge is limited; it is only relatively true.” Those who formulate relativism in this way only articulate the limitedness of our direct (phenomenological) and indirect (logical) knowledge. Nothing more. The absoluteness of the identity axiom is therefore not touched: the ontological foundation remains, even if it is limited. Expressed in terms of induction theory (generalization and generalization): our knowledge consists of samples. They are only samples. But they are still samples and not nothing.

The many-headed dragon.

Apel: “A relativist position - albeit in very different forms - is taken by skepticism, positivism, and (Kantian) criticism” (o.c., 197).

One can safely add: phenomen(al)ism (in more than one form); historicism, multiculturalism, culturalism, situationism (existentialism). Further, any nominalism.

Apel: “Ethical relativism extends the relativistic, subjective view to questions of morality as well.” (Ibid.).

E.O. 31.

Philosophy of law.

That law (and immediately justice) is one aspect of the world of conscientious action has long been clear. That does not prevent a moment's reflection on it from being superfluous.

1.-- *The essence of law.*

We used the expression “to do justice” (parallel to “to give something its due”). In this sense, “right” is to be understood in the very broad sense of “responding to a task.

‘Right’, which is now under discussion, is to be understood in a narrower sense, namely in the sense of right of disposition.

Applicable model.

A teacher, for example, has the task (‘duty’) to form a group of pupils according to a curriculum during a school year. Now, if she does not have the useful or necessary means (authority, class materials, time, cooperation of colleagues and parents and management, etc.) at her disposal (for that purpose), then she cannot realize that task and so her right of disposition does not come into its ‘own’.

More generally.

If in conscience we are obliged (duty), to fulfill tasks (GG + GV) and if means are necessary (and useful) to that end, then we have a justified claim to those means: in view of our duty we have a right to them, a right of disposal. -- In short: no duties without rights.

Enforceability.

“Man has over certain things a morally justifiable right of disposition which excludes (*note: if need be*) foreign interference.” (A. Brunner, *Die Grundfragen der Philosophie*, (The basic questions of philosophy), Freiburg, 1949-3, 271).

In other words: the claim or the right of disposition implies that others do not dispose of it. This includes enforcing the actual disposition by force if necessary.

Let us think of lawful, or rather legitimate, self-defense: we have a right - a right of disposition - to a biological body; whoever wants to kill us without any reason or justification, we may in conscience first kill ourselves (killing as a means of legitimate self-defense). For without our bodies we cannot cope with our tasks in this world. Or do we think of people who act in a pathological (physical or psychological) manner: they interfere with what is available to us with reason or grounds (reasonably justifiable).

E.O. 32.

Natural law/ positive law.

As natural law stands in relation to positive law, so natural law stands in relation to positive law.

1. Some rights flow from human nature, that is to say: that which all people, as human beings, essentially possess in common traits. Such rights - think of the right to life, to a minimum of property, etc. - apply everywhere and always, i.e. create tasks both in space and in time. These rights are the essence of all law.

2. Some rights spring from private and singular circumstances and are thus situational, i.e., bound to changing situations.

Let us think of times of famine in which people who are starving acquire the right to 'steal' - where it is possible and justified by some reason or ground - in order to survive. The term 'stealing' is actually out of place here, because 'stealing' involves appropriating (dispositional right which is dispositional wrong) what rightfully belongs to others, whereas appropriating people in starvation for reasons of hunger is dispositional right. That this is positive right that does not always and everywhere where people live is obvious: however, it does apply everywhere and always where starvation death is salvageable in this way (which proves that this right is a part of the natural law-in-circumstances).

Analogous to this is the concept of "lying": when an interlocutor(s) has no right to truth from your mouth and you conceal what is relevant, it is often said that you "lie". In fact, you conceal, with reason or justification, the truth to which another, possibly, has no right. Think of people who are bound by professional secrecy (doctors, for example).

2. -- *The concept of justice.*

The (enduring) will to claim for oneself one's rights and respect those of others is called justice. This virtue (understand: conscientiousness) is oriented towards a 'value', namely the right to decide.

Legal (legal) justice.

To the extent that justice adheres to rights expressed in laws, one speaks of "legal" justice.

Legalism then is the abuse of laws in the service of - in the name of - everything to which one is entitled and not entitled. One can call it a kind of fanaticism.

E.O. 31.

Distributive (distributive) and commutative (retributive) justice;

Justice is given names according to the domain of disposition to which it strikes.

1.-- *Distributive justice.*

When authority - state authority first and foremost - makes the tasks and the means to do so to each ability - ability - as adjusted as possible and thus distributed according to justice, then there is distributive justice.

Social Justice.

It applies first of all from social class to social class (“rich and poor” says the working-class man). It is basically a kind of distributive justice: goods and services are spread out - distributed so that each class gets its due share. Social justice claims for itself what is “right” and grants others what is their right.

Too bad: often social justice degenerates into a unilateral claiming of what is already rightfully valid for its own benefit. Which is social injustice.

2.-- *Exchange or retributive justice.*

To the extent that not the government but e.g. the classes themselves claim for themselves what appears to be a right and grant the other classes what is due to them, there is already an exchange justice.

Barter justice takes place between individuals or groups according to the law of “for equal performance equal consideration.” The negotiation between livestock buyer and farmer of a “just” price for an animal being sold is exchange justice. Note that there is a situational aspect here as well, as the price fluctuates with market trends e.g., the price of an animal is the same as the price of a commodity.

Legal Positivism..

Legal positivism is one form of relativism. -- That philosophy asserts that all that is ‘law’ and ‘right’ is only valid by virtue of an actual (‘positive’) -- usually proclaimed by authority -- act. That act in itself thus creates law. Without any reason or ground in the ‘being(the)’ or the objective, independent of the acting authority.

Note -- Not the given and requested in itself but what authority ‘says’ and ‘does’, creates law-and-order, -- if necessary without responding, with conscience, to given and requested .-- According to some interpreters of this, this amounts to “the power-(position)” of those in power (governments, lobbies etc.).

E.O. 34.

Platonic ontology.

Someone once said in French: “On est philosophe dans la mesure où l’on platonise” (One is a philosopher to the extent that one acts platonically). This alone is a reason to dwell a little more extensively on Platonic thinking, which can be summarized as the doctrine of ideas (well distinguished from the term “idealism” which includes ways of thinking that are very far removed from Platon’s doctrine of ideas).

One paid close attention to the fact that the term “doctrine of ideas” is a metonymic definition of Platonizing: for the “ideas” are a part of the whole or system (which Platon’s texts covertly hide somewhere) of Platon’s conceptions.

Essentially, we lean toward *O. Willmann, Geschichte des Idealismus, I (Urgeschichte und Geschichte des antiken Idealismus)*, Braunschweig, 1907-2, 431/445 (*Die Ideenlehre*).

1.-- *Reality in appearance and in ‘reality’.*

One never forgets that Platon, was borne of the concern to distinguish and even separate sham reality from real reality. There is on the one hand “to mèn on” (all that is rather nothing) and on the other hand “to ontos on” (all that is really, or truly real). Whoever misses this critical attitude of Platon - in Socrates’ wake, by the way - understands as good as nothing of his entire philosophizing.

Theoria (lat. Speculatio). Thoroughness.

The concern mentioned is called Platon with Pythagoras, ‘theoria’, i.e. trying to know by observation what one is dealing with. Anyone who translates by ‘speculation’ risks misunderstanding the true observational character. The ancient Romans understood this: they translated by ‘speculatio’, i.e. the activity of the soldier on guard or of the peeper or simply of an observer. Watching closely and ‘following’ to fathom. That is platonic (and paleopythagorean) theoria, filo.sophia, wise.desire.

The platonic study program.

No better introduction than the platonic program of study. As e.g. his *Politeia* outlines this.

a. *Learning to perceive and sense with the senses,-- together: experience.*

The student in the ‘akadèmeia’ learned first of all to experience. The sense-perceivable and sensation-accessible world is the first thing the student learns to pay attention to and what he learns to follow.

E.O. 34.

We view, with the eyes of an ancient Greek, a round boulder found on the beach. It is beautifully rounded on all sides. It is of a certain weight. It is gray in color. All these features. These characterize him. -- This beautiful round boulder is a 'horaton', something visible, -- an 'aisthèton', something experiential.

Note -- As a specimen of the class of boulders, he is "image" (the term used to describe "specimen" of a collection). Image of what? Of "the beautiful boulder" for sure. But that will come later. In the meantime we remember that in and yet above that beautiful stone "the beautiful stone" definitely shows itself.

The beautiful boulder as a work of art.

To the same experiential order, according to Platon, also belongs all that represents a natural fact in the form of a work of art. Thus a painted beautiful boulder.

Note -- As a representation in material form, the painted boulder is "image" of an "image," i.e., "representation" of a specimen found in nature. But the representation nevertheless shows in its way again an 'image', a specimen, of "the beautiful boulder" without more.

Thus the students learn to 'experience', i.e. to perceive and feel. The latter refers in particular to the beauty of the beautiful boulder: like the great mass of the ancient Greeks, Platon was very sensitive to beauty. In the externally perceived stone, there is something - the beauty without question - that provokes an inner perception and that enriches the experience. If this same beautiful stone is then shown in a lesson, for example, for its beauty, then it represents "something valuable" that makes "the good without doubt" felt and experienced.

Typically antique Greek said: the beautiful boulder then becomes from beautiful, beautiful-and-useful and in that sense a learning asset. He is a 'kalokaigathon', something that is clean-and-good.

Conclusion.-- So we definitively put out of our minds the résumés of résumés with which quite a few Platon critics content themselves when they speak antiplatonic. Experience is the element - cocked-for of the Platonic (as of the paleopythagorean) theoria, fathom.

Note -- Before we begin the next point of study, we mention very briefly the term "stoicheiosis", lat.: elementatio, search for the elements that make the experienced understandable. One also said: the search for the 'archai', lat.: principia, presuppositions.

E.O. 36.

b. *Learning to advance to the mathematical prepositions.*

Experienced, yes. But tracing the grounds: also! - To fathom what is experienced. That is pythagorean-platonic theoria.-- The students learn to pay attention to the 'arithmos', the mathematical structure, in this beautiful boulder.- The boulder is nicely round. Circular in ancient Greek 'kuklos', lat.: circulus. He who fathoms the boulder, platonically at least, pays attention to all that can be noticed in it mathematically.

Note -- Let us not forget that, in ancient Greek, 'msthèsis' is 'learning process'. The act of (re)learning, The desire to (re)learn. Insight.

Was 'mathèmatikon' "all that is related to learning". Now, with the Pythagoreans, the one was the true: the unit (as the 1 and the point, -- number and space mathematical) and its multiples (numbers from two and figures from the line across the plane to the body) was "the true," i.e., the truth or information (we would now say) concerning the one.

Platon keeps up the "mnèmè" or tradition: the "mathematical" (in the Pythagorean sense) remained one of the elements that make e.g. the beautiful boulder, intellectually, intelligible(er); it was also for the Platonic school an "archè", a presupposition, that made intelligible(er).

Note -- That was 'stoicheiosis': looking up the comprehensible(er) 'elements' because 'stoicheion', Lat. elementum, was 'element'. Theoria includes stoicheiosis.

As an aside, Platon called this turn in the learning process that is the theoria, 'periagogè', turn (in a circular form especially). Or 'metastrophè', turn, yes turn. He wants to say: a turning point in the theoria.

Nl.: one does not leave the sense experienced; one looks through it! To the 'noèton', lat.: intelligibile, that which appeals to the mind (intellect and reasoning ability, spirit (feeling of value, sensing the 'good' and will). The 'intelligiebele' (one also says). The first intelligible is the mathematical. Here the circle. Or maybe the round (geometrical) 'body'.

c. *Learning to push through to the 'eidos' (being), resp. the 'idea' (true being).*

Note that since the beginning of modernity in Western Europe, a radical non-platonic language has used the term "idea" for thought in the human mind. Neither antiquity nor scholasticism ever did. Therefore: we translate 'idea' by "being true", "actual reality", in the sensory experienced.

E.O. 37.

In this third degree of *theoria* she becomes ‘noësis’, lat.: *intellectio*, mental insight. For after the mathematical she now grasps the second intelligible. This exhibits, according to an academic tradition confirmed by Aristotle, two aspects.

1. The beautiful boulder possesses its ‘*eidos*’, i.e. presence that presents itself.
2. This being or presence that presents itself is the ‘*idea*’, the true being; or being core. It shows itself in the being that is actually its being or presence. Although hiding in and above the *eidos*, the *idea* is nevertheless that *eidos* itself insofar as it shows itself to the ‘*nous*’. Lat.: *intellectus*, spirit.

The distinction between ‘mnèmè’ (vague consciousness) and clarified consciousness).

Platon, and later Aristotle in his wake, distinguished two degrees of consciousness within the structure and especially the genesis of the learning process.

Note -- usually the terms ‘*mnèmè*’ (lat.: *memoria*) and ‘*anamnèsis*’ (lat.: *reminiscentia*) are translated by ‘*memory*’ or ‘*memento*’. This misses the actual meaning expressed, e.g., in the name of the goddess of the muses, *Mnèmōsunè*. After all, the musical ability - according to Homer and Hèsiod, the two ‘*primal poets*’ - refers to “*ta pro onta, ta onta, ta essomena*”, all that was, is now and will be.

In other words: it is the music form of thought of ontology which indeed divides all that is into past being, present being and future being. *Mnèmōsunè* is thus “*expanded consciousness*” (and this is ontologically or transcendently expanded consciousness or ‘*remembrance*’ or ‘*remembrance*’ or ‘*memory*’ as before the mind or keeping in the mind).

In his dialogue *Menon* e.g. it appears that *Platon* clearly distinguishes vague consciousness or thinking from clarified consciousness or thinking. After all, this exhibits *stoicheiosis*, i.e. it remembers the data and summarizes them in the light of class (all beautiful boulders e.g.) and of system (the whole beautiful boulder).

That is the first meaning, in Platonic texts, of *anamnesis*, - distinguishable from a second (which means the after-working expanded consciousness of a life before this earthly life). ‘*Mnèmè*’ is, that thinking or awareness of something - take our beautiful boulder - which does not situate. Neither in a collection (class) nor in a system. ‘*Vague*’ thinking does not see a giving in the light of a totality.

E.O. 38.

P. Van Dorp, Aristotle on two workings of memory (Platonic reminiscences) in: Tijdschr. v.Philos. 54 (1992), 3 (Sept.), 490, summarizes.

a. Menon, with his vague thinking, experiences every piece of information (...) however complex, each time as an undifferentiated - and self-contained entity. He cannot analyze his knowing into smaller units, nor compose it (*note: synthesize it*) into larger or more complicated wholes. It is at once not ordered”“.

b. Menon's slave, with his clarified thinking, appears to live from his “mind”“ (*op.: nous, intellect*). He is able to analyze and process what he knows. His knowledge is not a collection of loose data but forms an ordered unity from such data. (...). Such a person does not memorize isolated impressions but stores what he knows in ordered wholes.”“

That is the resounding definition of stoicheiosis! As *E.W. Beth, The Philosophy of Mathematics*, Antwerp / Nijmegen, 1944, 34vv. (Stoicheiosis), 42vv. (Stoicheiosis), explains them.

Well, that is ‘noësis’, the grasping of eidos and idea. Our beautiful boulder situated in the collection (boulders, beautiful things, beautiful boulders) and situated in the whole (the boulder is a whole so that the whole boulder has existence and reality core, eidos and idea) - of all the determined characteristics: form (geometric form), mass (weight), color e.g..

These sensory experienced knowledges are no coincidental elements: they make up the whole boulder as a coherence. His being summarizes the knowledge traits (conceptual contents) into a whole, the entire beautiful stone.

The resistant in the inconstant or rather: the identic in the non-identic. -- Platon's ideation is identitive. It thinks within the differential “totally identical/ part-identical (analogous) / totally non-identical”“. Our mind, as a grasp of eidos and idea, of being and reality core, turns toward the identic in the midst of multiplicity.

The collection of all possible beautiful boulders e.g. splinters into a limitless multitude of distinguishable and separated beautiful boulders the one being and the one reality core “the beautiful boulder without more”“.

This is a reality that is identical (enduring) in all copies, however distinct and separate (“many”“) they may be.

E.O. 39.

The collection of all possible characteristics - loose characteristics then - of the boulder (**a.** color, weight, **b.** figure (geometric) e.g.) are pulled out of their fragmentation in the light of the one cohesion that makes up this boulder, this beautiful boulder.

Not surprisingly, Aristotle says: “‘The ‘eidè’, all that is of ideas, are the ground of reality (*note*: presupposition concerning real reality) - aitia, (literally: all that makes intelligible as presuppositions) - of what is. The one is the ground of reality of the ‘eidè’, the existence of ideas’“. The one is not only punctual, the numerical unity (monas); it is also all that makes a multitude one. Thanks to viz. connections (of similarity (class) or coherence (system)), distinct and separate things come to unity.

In other words, Platon’s whole harmology (order) doctrine shows itself here. She is the eye that he has for all that is identical (‘enduring’) in all difference and gap.

Not surprisingly, too, Seneca of Cordoba (+1/+65; stoic) defines the idea as “‘eorum quae natura sunt, exemplar aeternum’“ (of all that is by nature, the eternal paragon).”“ Eternal (aeternum)”“ in the sense of enduring, through syn- and diachronic changes (differences, gaps) identical.

Not surprisingly, Xenocrates of Chalkedon, leader of the academy -338/ -314, defined: “‘The idea is the pictorial proposition of what is permanently existing under the point of view of its nature (*op.*: true reality)’“.

Up to there Platon’s program of study explained in detail.

To summarize: the sensory experienced (observed / sensed) is examined thanks to stoicheiosis (anamnesis) for its ‘elements’ of mathematical and ideal nature. So that it is made ‘intelligible’.

2. -- The ideas as “‘living’“ beings.

In a hotly debated passus from Sophistes, Platon attributes life and spirit to the ideas. “‘Would we allow ourselves to be led to believe that movement, life, soul and insight (‘fronèsis’) are not an essential feature of being without more (‘toi pantelos onti’)? That which is without more, thus does not live and think but - we think: the high and holy, i.e. spirit - stands still (‘akinèton’)? “‘. One senses in the rhetorical question Platon’s answer: the eidè / ideai move (of themselves), live, are animated, are gifted with insight.

E.O. 40.

In the *Timaios*, it reads, “Just as the changeable sense world shows itself as a plurality of ‘zoa’, lat.: vivientia, living beings (life forms),--of ‘thremmata’, beings, encompassing in itself, so too the ‘thinkable’ (intelligible) order of being encompasses a plurality of ‘thinkable’ (intelligible) beings (“noèta zoa”).”

Note -- O. Willmann interprets this as follows. - The term “noèta zoa,” conceivable beings, most clearly summarizes the two traits of being of the concept of idea.

1. As intelligibel, imaginable,

i.e., amenable to processing by our minds (nous, intellectus), they stand out against the sensory data in which they, us earthlings, show.

2. As “living beings”

they are endowed with “life” and thus “principles of life”: they make the sensory experienced things participate in their life and make “the living” in it.

Note -- What that kind of intelligible life actually is -- the texts cited remain obscure -- may be gleaned from *Platon*’s conception of the divinity of all that is: “The sensory world is ‘theos aisthètos’, experiential deity; the world of ideas is ‘theos noètos’, intelligible deity.” Thus in the *Timaios*.

Indeed: Platon still lives strongly from a non-desacralized world or culture and strongly opposes, e.g., the desecration and degodification (secularization) that protosophism advocated in his time.

Already from Thales a word is in circulation: “Nature is full of deities (demons)”. One could call this a form of “onto.theo.logy,” i.e., thinking that designates being (sensory and supersensory) as “theos,” deity, divine.

Note -- What is certain is that all that lives within our sense-experienced world, contains in its eidos/ idea life, biological life then, as the origin of sense-experienced biological life: the ideas i.e. of biological beings contain biological life. Otherwise biological beings would never have biological life.

So too are the ideas of intellect-gifted beings: they encompass and cause intellect in the intellect-gifted beings.

E.O. 41.

3.-- The 'causer' (demiurge and deities): divine ideas.

While the painted beautiful boulder is a sensory experience, as a work of art it is caused by a causing person, the artist.

Similarly, the naturally given beautiful round boulder is caused by a causal factor.

In the *Timaios* it reads: the 'dèmiourgos', démiürg, i.e. the one who exercises a publicly known profession, and also the deities who imitate him cause the ideas and at the same time the existence of a number of things. For example: the head of a human being; the human body as a vehicle of the head; the eye.

Translate "demiurge" by "universe creator. This is not a creator god in the Biblical sense. For he finds the cosmic matter and the ideas not caused by him as matter to be worked on, to be arranged according to the available ideas

Council Conclusions.-- The universe-causer or "demiurge" without more makes council conclusions: he sets goals before his eyes, in his mind, and realizes those goals.

Note -- In this he resembles, with great reservation, the Biblical Yahweh or Holy Trinity. - Thus, the bringing about -- causing -- of the eye or ear is possible only on the basis of such a counsel. "There be a seeing or a hearing". Such a council Conclusion Platon explicitly situates in the mind of the universe demiurge.

Divine Ideas.

According to *E. De Strycker, Beknopte geschiedenis van de antieke filosofie*, (Concise history of ancient philosophy,), Antwerp, 1967, 114, Albinos of Smyrna who was around +150 teacher of the famous physician Galenos of Pergamon, for the first time situates the ideas and their eidè in God, in God's spirit.

With this, Albinus of Smyrna begins a centuries-long platonistic or at least platonizing tradition of pagan and biblical teaching of ideas. We find them e.g. with Joh. Kepler, the modern natural scientist and cosmologist.

As an aside, in the Bible there are run-ins in this sense. For God's ideas determine in the Bible all that is created (but here 'created' in the thorough sense), especially the phases of sacred or holy history. All that is done is normed somewhere even if it deviates from it due to sin, by God's ideas (which find in the Decalogue its vernacular summary as morality).

E.O. 42.

Note -- According to O. Willmann, o.c., 370/379, there is a “mystical” element in platonic thought.

The “mysteries” (a form of small-scale religions for limited circles of initiates) provided a “wisdom,” precursor to philosophy, wisdom studies. Thus it is that e.g. Herakleitos of Ephesos (-535/-465) - whose teachings Platon learned through Kratulos, a heraklitean who was Platon’s teacher - comes to define “the true philosopher”, as a ‘bakchos’, initiate in the dionusos mysteries.

As an aside, the wine god Dionusos was considered to be brimming with generating (causing) and regenerating (regenerating) life forces (activated in wine rites) such that he could act as a donor of culture. The “true sage” - according to Herakleitos, whose philosophy of movement (mobilism) that places creation and decay at the center, profoundly influenced Platon - is like “the one who has gone through well-finished initiations.” “Philosophy’ according to him is “the all being revealing initiation”.

Note -- Alongside Dionusos, Apollon was considered an initiatory deity.-- In the mysteries, it is said that Apollon possesses “the seal”,-- there is even talk of possessing “the seal of the universe which leaves its mark on every living being according to his individual nature”.

Indeed: there again, a testimony rest in Platonism of religion in ancient Greece! Platon calls the idea/being ‘tupos’, stamp or ‘sfragis’, seal.

As such the idea / being is ‘paradeigma’ (hence our ‘paradigm’), paragon according to which every course - kinèsis, lat.: motus - or process is determined. The paragon that the idea / being is, puts its stamp on every process.

In the words of Cl. Ramnoux: the ‘rhuthmos’, the flowing course of things (with Herakleitos and also with Platon, though differently interpreted) is a course or process provided for by regulation.

With G. Van Riel, *How pure is unbounded pleasure? (Plato’s Philebus or the conversion of a hedonist)*, in: *Tijdschr. v. philos.* 57 (1995): 3 (Sept.), 443, we say, “The becoming (*op.*: any movement or ‘rhuthmos’) is always already normed by the being (*op.*: which platonically speaking is the idea/being).”

Conclusion.-- Like all ancient thinkers so also Platon: one understands them well only if one knows their religious-sacred roots well.

E.O. 43.

The “supreme” good.

The ideas that provide the existence of the things brought about by that idea - are divine ‘beings’.

The Platon of myths who portrays himself in his writings as the complement of his ‘dialectical’ (understand: reasoning) method where it falls short, calls the deity, “im Geiste der Mystik” (in the spirit of mysticism). O. Willmann, o.c., 421), in the spirit of mysticism (understand: of mysteries), and the one (“to hèn”) and at the same time the good (the good) (“to agathon”).

The neuter terms (“it ...”) renounce the person and personality of the gods / goddesses who together make up “to theion”, all that is divine. Those neuter terms, “it ...”, only mention the power of the gods / goddesses as the ability to make all being(s) one. Willmann: “die all-einende Macht”, the all unifying power!

Platon initiated his best students into the view that the one and the good are identical.-- He explains the structure of this as follows:

- a. the highest or supreme good (or rather: Good,-- with a capital letter) is unique;
- b1. it makes all that exists outside of it as regards beings and realities, emerge from itself as “imitatio participata”, as imitation (image) which is participation;-- in other words, as a visible representation of itself (as the idea “the good” which gives birth);
- b2. at the same time, however, as supreme good, supreme good attracts the beings and realities that it allows to emerge from itself, re-engages them and ‘binds’ them into ‘unity’.

Note -- This outward and inward structure will define the language of the mystics for centuries. To begin with, Neoplatonism (Plotinos e.g.).

Well, ontologically speaking, the one and the (primeval) good being - rather - is “to ontos on”, the being in an being way, the really real. Hence the ideas, showing the one and good in the realities founded by the ideas as being (eidos) as omnipresent are the omnipresent sign. However transcendent (higher than) the one-and-good is immanent. Just as the idea is transcendent and its being (eidos) immanent.

Conclusion: The ideas are divine ideas. - This sense will have become clear by now, after this little chapter on Platon’s mythical side. The ‘mystical’ side or slant characterizes Platon totally.

E.O. 44.

4.-- *The ideas collectively make up the one (divine) cosmos.*

The class and especially the system are that in whose light all being is seen. This, after all, is how the idea/being is exposed.

What gives if we think the totality of all that was, is, will be? The term 'kosmeo', I order, (I establish or create order), teaches us what the term cosmos means: order, arrangement. Preferably understood as good order or arrangement.

As an aside, in the ethical sense, "cosmos" then means "the conscientious order.

With the paleopythagoreans, 'cosmos' meant the order that the universe displays. And 'well as idea 'order(ning)' that creates in the things to be, so that as universe-order(ning) they are amenable, knowable, enjoyable.

We find the term "cosmos" and the idea underlying it first pronounced by the Pythagoreans: they meant first of all the measure of knowledge that ancient Greek life and ancient Greek art knew at that time. Thus *P.L. Landsberg, Die Welt des Mittelalters und wir*, (The medieval world and us), Bonn, 1925-3, 47.

Landsberg quotes Aristotle: "The Pythagoreans were concerned in the first place with mathematism, worked it into existence. Raised in mathematism, they interpreted the mathematical prepositions as the prepositions of all being. (...). They saw in the number figures (*opm.*: arithmoi) the properties and at the same time the prepositions of the harmony. Everything that exists was - according to them - wholly and completely made according to number figures. (...). The universe they understood as harmony and numerical figure".

Note -- We saw that, in the formation system of the academy, the fathoming of the sensuous began with paying attention to all that was "mathematical.

Platon - as Landsberg underlines - retained the "mathematism" of the Pythagoreans. And at the same time the concept of "harmony" as a characteristic of the entire cosmos as a universe that testifies to beauty. Because 'beautiful' in the ancient Greek sense is everything that provokes and enforces surprise.

As *A. Guzzo, Le concept philosophique' de 'monde'*, in: *Dialectica (Entretiens d' Oberhofen)* 15 (1961): 1/2, Paris / Neuchâtel, 97 says: just as the intelligible order(s) of ideas provokes amazement, so too does the sensory experiential order(s) which is the visible and tangible representation of them.

E.O. 45.

5.-- Classical arguments on behalf of the platonic theory of ideas.

Willmann gives somewhat elaborate four arguments from which one serves to substantiate the doctrine of ideas. We summarize them.

1. Memorial.

Mnèmè, especially in the form of anamnesis, i.e. ordered degree of thinking (memory is remembering entering into), provides the only subjective access.

On this earth everything is unsteady. Consequence: a pure remembrance (theoria) of it is unfeasible. Only in the light of the pure form of remembrance - that is, the idea of remembrance - do we come to think “as purely as possible.”

2.1. Truth.

The “kathara alètheia”, the pure truth, concerning the inconstant things on this earth is, in view of its mixture with untruth (“pseudos”), unfeasible. Only in the light of the pure form of truth - that is, the idea ‘truth’ - do we come to think truth “as pure as possible”.

2.2. Number structure.

The first truth about the data on this earth is mathematical.-- obscured is that truth by its interlocking with untruth. Mathematical fathoming becomes possible only in the light of the pure numerical figures present in the things experienced. As pure as possible. Because here too there is a sense of limits and fallibilism (a sense of fallibility).

2.3. Definition.

On this earth things are ‘aorista’, undefined,-- vague. Because changeable, unsteady in time and space. Our understanding of things should be the reflection of the idea of things. Which is impracticable. Only in the light of the idea in its purity that comes through in our work of thought (remembrance), do we come to fathom the second truth concerning things, after the mathematical one, “as pure as possible.”

One can see it: the four arguments regarding the doctrine of ideas reflect the Platonic method regarding the teaching of philosophy.

Similia similibus.

The knowing - thinking subject is attuned to truth (mathematical and ideational). This o.g. nature relatedness between subject and object (knowing thinking and truth). “Hupo to homoïou to homoïon katalambanesthai” (By means of the like (subject thinking knowingly) grasp the like (truth))! This is called Platon “kalon zugon”, the beautiful twosome.

E.O. 46.

6. -- *The functions of the idea / being.*

Let us return to the idea of 'cosmos'. This is: the totality - collection and system - of all that is.-- O. Willmann summarizes these functions in the term 'mediation' (= mediation, i.e. when intermediate term(s) play a role).

a. *Ideas mediate* between e.g. the demiurge (as Platon conceived it) or - later - God, on the one hand and, on the other, the things of our experiential world on this earth. For the one who has ideas in his mind (the demiurge or deities imitating him; God), works them out in 'images' (specimens) of them which present and reflect them in a defective way. They play a tone-setting role.

b. *The ideas mediate* between the things of our world of experience on this earth and our knowing-thinking mind.-- Just as the visibility of sensory things and our eye as a capacity to see them are attuned to each other ("noble yoke"), so too is the knowability and thinkability (intelligibility) of the mathematical and ideal grounds or essence of the things of our world of experience on this earth "noble yoke."

Note -- This is in ancient language what since scholasticism (and Fr. Brentano) has been called "intentionality" (orientation of our minds and senses to the world(s)).

Note - O. Willmann, o. c., 440). -- The idea/being provides the experienced data with higher degrees of reality and its knowing-thinking with higher ('pure') degrees of truth. Through the participation (gr.: *mêthexis*, lat.: *participatio*) in the idea/presence, things on this earth become "ontos onta", really real things, and the concepts, in our earthly mind, *terzake* "kathara alètheia", lat.: *pura veritas*, pure truth.

c. *The ideas mediate* between the given reality, as far as known through concepts (which are always only concepts as far as our mind on this earth can really grasp all that is), on the one hand, and, on the other hand, our behavior,--our praxis (either as labor or as conscientious behavior).

"Eidè kai èthè", ideas and forms of behavior, go together as normative and normalized. Thus the good action arises and participates in the one good in which all ideas and at once all being take root.

Lightmetaphysics.-- On this earth; with its darknesses, experienced things become "luminous," our mind-and-senses become "enlightened," and our behavior is "informed" by the ideas.

10.7. Elements of ontology (II)

Contents

Section 1:

Preface.	1/4
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Section 2: (2/48)

The essence of philosophy: ontology 2	
1.1.-- Philosophy is not a religion.	2
1.2.-- Philosophy is not an art.	2
1.3.-- Philosophy is not an ideology.	2
1.4.-- Philosophy is also not the life and world view 2	
1.5.-- Philosophy is not commons thinking.	3
1.6.-- Philosophy is not a world and life view.	4
What Philosophy is 4	
Ontological understanding.	5
The crisis of metaphysics	6
Ontologic system building.	7
Aristotle on the subject.	10
The crisis of ontology in antiquity.-	11.
The XIX - th and the XX - th centuries as a crisis of ontology.	12
1. -- Radical elimination.	12
2. Replacement.	12
3.-- Radical re-establishment.	13
4. -- Updating.	13
The crisis of ontology in postmodern terms.	14
Truth. - Ontological and non-ontological (categorical).	16
Note -- Truth theories.	17
Aristotle's "evidentiary postulate".	18
Aristotle's axiomatics.	19
The paradox of "the liar".	20
Transcendental unity theory -	22
The transcendental, "good(s)" (value).	23
Moral (ethical or moral) good.	24

The foundations of ethics (moral philosophy).	25
The moral or ethical natural law.	27
Philosophical theory of law.	31
Distributive and commutative justice;	33
Platonic ontology.	34
1.-- Reality in appearance and in 'reality'.	34
a. Learning to perceive and sense with the senses,	34
b. Learning to advance to the mathematical postulates.	36
c. Learning to push through to the 'eidos' (resp. the 'idea')	36
2. -- The ideas as 'living' beings.	39
1. As intelligible, thinkable,	40
2. As "living beings"	40
3.-- The "causer" (demiurge and deities): divine ideas.	41
Divine ideas.	41
The 'supreme' good.	43
4.-- The ideas collectively make up the one (divine) cosmos.	44
5.-- Classical arguments in virtue of the platonic theory of ideas.	45
6. -- The functions of the idea / being.	46