

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

METAPHYSICS

OR: SYSTEMATIC ONTOLOGY

USC School of Philosophy

Philosophy 460: **METAPHYSICS**

Fall Semester 2010--Meets 4:00-5:15PM, Mon/Wed.

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Office 205D MHP, Office hours 5:30-7PM Mon/Wed.and by appointment

In this course we begin with an examination of what Metaphysics (Systematic Ontology) is as a field of research and knowledge. We then take up the systematically fundamental topics: identity and difference, being or existence (and non-being or non-existence), and the categories of beings. Then some sub-categorical questions: e.g. Are there universals? Are there particulars? Are there relations? This semester a third or more of the course will be devoted to the question of the existence of universals (Plato's "forms," etc.), and to the issues around substance. The last part of the course is devoted to some special topics of great importance for the field of Metaphysics (Ontology), and this semester it will be the ontological status of concepts and how concepts function in ontological arguments--concepts, in the study of the possible and the necessary. Finally, we will briefly glance at Putnam's idea of "Ethics without Ontology."

An underlying issue throughout the course this semester and always will be the credibility or incredibility of Naturalism as a position on **what there is**. Naturalism in ontology is, very roughly, the view that all that exists are physical objects such as we visibly see about us from day to day and their physical constituents (atoms, sub-atomic 'particles' and 'forces'). Another way of specifying Naturalism is to say that the particular sciences are the sole arbiters of what exists and what is known: that what cannot be dealt with "scientifically" cannot be known and does not exist. At this point, Naturalism has almost nothing to recommend it on rational grounds, and is primarily a political stance directed toward control of governmental and social policy,

especially in research, education, and legislation. (See Dennett's "Brights" statement, attached.) The critiques of it as a philosophical position are numerous and trenchant. See Barry Stroud's APA Presidential Address, "The Charm of Naturalism," in *APA Proceedings and Addresses*, Nov. 1996, Vol. 70, #2, pp. 43-55. Also, Steven J. Wagner and Richard Warner, edd., *Naturalism: A Critical Appraisal*, University of Notre Dame Press, 1993; and Wm. L. Craig and J. P. Moreland, edd., *Naturalism: A Critical Analysis*, Routledge, 2000.

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The order of topics taken up in an **ideal** course in ontology might be:

1. Ontology as a field of knowledge. Metaphysics and Epistemology: Especially: Can Epistemology (or Philosophy of Language) be successfully pursued prior to Ontology? Must it be?
2. Identity, non-identity and related concepts.
3. Existence/non-existence, essence and existence.
4. Predication or exemplification of properties.
5. Categories.
6. Individuals: particulars and substances.
7. Universals: Properties and Relations.
8. Space and Time.
9. Grounds: reasons and causes.
10. The ontology of matter.
11. The ontology of mind.
12. The ontology of language.
13. An ontology for reference, truth, logic and knowledge.
14. Ontology and origins or coming to be (Cosmology).

Due to limitations of time, however, comments on many of these topics will be limited to placing them in the context of a systematic ontology. **Topics 1-7 will be our main subjects of discussion**

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TEXTS AND SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND REQUIREMENTS

(A). Texts:

- R. M. Chisholm, The Problem of the Criterion.
 F. Suarez, On the Various Kinds of Distinctions.
 A. B. Schoedinger, The Problem of Universals.
 D. M. Armstrong, Universals: An Opinionated
 Introduction.
 J. P. Moreland, Universals.
 Saul Kripke, *Naming and Necessity*

There will, from time to time, be some lecture notes handed out and some additional short readings as well.

Articles on most topics dealt with in this course are contained in:

- Burkhardt and Smith, Handbook of Metaphysics and Ontology.
 Kim and Sosa, A Companion to Metaphysics.
 Paul Edwards, The Encyclopedia of Philosophy

Please note: It is almost always the case that some of the texts ordered are not available from the publishers. So some revisions of assigned readings may be required. Also, the Instructor is actively working on the topics of this course, and usually undergoes some changes of mind as the course proceeds

You should pick up the Chisholm book and the Suarez handout immediately. Get the first packet of handouts at 1st class.

(B). Formal Requirements:

- Several precis to be designated.
 Regular participation in class, ready when called upon.
 Mid-term Oct. 13. A take home exam.
 Final.

(C). Schedule of Assignments and Examinations:

1st Week, August 23-27. *The Nature of Ontology.*
Relationship between Ontology and Epistemology.

Discussion of the course outline and of the following handouts:

- Willard, "Three Approaches to the Study of Metaphysics" and "Introduction to the Elements of Ontology: What Ontology is."

"Metaphysics and Epistemology"
 "Eleven Points about What I (WE) Know"
 (all handed out at first meeting)
 Laurence and Macdonald, Contemporary Readings in
 the Foundations of Metaphysics, pp. 1-20.

Some topics:

1. What ontology (or 'metaphysics') is.
2. Three ways of approaching and doing ontology, plus *Apologia* for the 'First Principles' approach.
3. Relationship between ontology (metaphysics) and the theory of knowledge (epistemology).
4. Specification of 'object' as basic subject of Ontological inquiry.
5. "World View" and the immense practical significance of Metaphysics.

TO BE READ FIRST WEEK OF THE SEMESTER--

- A. The above handouts.
- B. R. M. Chisholm, The Problem of the Criterion
- C. Laurence and Macdonald, pp. 1-20.

{Suggested (not assigned) further readings on the nature of Metaphysics/Ontology: In Library.)

- B. Blanshard, "In Defense of Metaphysics," in Kennick and Lazerowitz, edd., Metaphysics: Readings and Reappraisals, 331 and following.
 - A. Quinton, The Nature of Things, pp. 235-251
 - A. E. Taylor, Elements of Metaphysics, pp. 1-49
 - R. Harre, The Philosophies of Science, pp. 100ff
 - J. Needleman, The Sense of the Cosmos, Chs. 1 & 2
 - B. Aune, Metaphysics: the Elements, Chap. 1
 - D. W. Hamlyn, Metaphysics, pp. 1-10

Second Week, Aug. 30-Sept. 3: *Identity and Difference.*
Being as being the same as. **Note that the 6th is a Holiday.**

Some Topics:

<Carry over from last time: Chisholm and "the wheel".>

1. Can identity be defined? No.
2. Is there a general criterion of identity (or difference)--especially, is sameness of properties

useable as a general criterion of sameness? No.
Why not?

3. How are identity and difference involved with each other? (See W. E. Johnson chapter on "Identity." Handout.)
4. How can identity statements be meaningful, true and important for knowledge? (Frege)
5. Conceptions closely related to identity and difference.
6. Identity, difference and separability or inseparability: the classical theory of 'distinctions' (Suarez, Descartes, Hume)

TO BE READ SECOND WEEK: This is a tough week! Give it time.
Handouts from Frege and Johnson
Suarez, On the Various Kinds of Distinctions (see study guide)

- R. Cartwright, "Identity and Substitutivity," in Laurence and Macdonald, pp. 69-80

3rd week: Sept. 6-10: Identity and Related Concepts.
*Being: Historical Notes on **existence**.*

Some Topics:

1. Finish identity and the classical theory of distinctions.
2. Statement and discussion of the three points which emerge from reflection upon the history of the discussion of 'existence' or the concept of existence.
3. High points in the history of the discussion of what 'existence' is, and of the distinction between essence (what) and existence (that), from Plato to Kant. Extensive notes handed out.

TO BE READ THIRD WEEK:

Selections from Aquinas, On Being and Essence. (Handout)

Willard, "Lecture Notes on the Essence/Existence Distinction and on the 'Nature' of Existence." (Handout)

4th Week: Sept. 13-17: Being or Existence: Historical Notes
Continued: Moore and Quine. The "Linguistic Turn."

Some Topics:

1. Analytical discussions of 20th Century positions on the nature of existence or being:

- a. A. E. Taylor
- b. G. E. Moore
- c. W. V. O. Quine
- d. Martin Heidegger

2. Statement and clarification of a criterion (not a definition) of existence: of necessary and sufficient conditions under which any 'object' (as earlier specified) is, exists, or is real (all the same thing). "Serious Actualism." The mysteries of quantifiers and names. "Substitution." Restrictions on the existence of "possible worlds."

TO BE READ FOURTH WEEK:

Encyclopedia article on "Essence and Existence"
(Handout)

G. E. Moore handout.

Willard, "Concluding Lecture on the Conception of Reality" (handout)

Quine, "On What There Is," and Alston, "Ontological Commitments," in Laurence and Macdonald, pp. 32-54

5th Week: Sept. 20-24: *Categories. Particulars and Universals.*

Some Topics:

<We will have to complete last week's topics.>

1. The problem of the "Deduction" of the categories.
2. The nature of substance. Substances and particulars.
3. The argument for particulars (not necessarily substances).

TO BE READ FIFTH WEEK:

Aristotle, "On Categories," in Schoedinger, pp. 16-22.

Loux, "Beyond Substrata and Bundles: A Prolegomenon to a Substance Ontology.," Laurence and Macdonald, pp. 233-245

Allaire, "On Bare Particulars," Laurence and Macdonald, 248-253.

Armstrong, Universals: An Opinionated Introduction, Chapter 4.

Moreland, Universals, Chapter 7.

Van Cleve, "Three Versions of the Bundle Theory," Laurence and Macdonald, pp.264-272.

6th Week: Sept 27-Oct 1: *The Ontological Significance of Reduction and Reductionism.*

Some Topics.

1. What "reduction" is and what it isn't.
2. The difference between "reductions" and Scientific Discoveries. Reduction as a "choice" or decision.
3. Assumptions required to make "reduction" relevant to questions of ontology.
4. Reductionism in ethical theory. (Hobbes, Jackson)
5. Reduction and universals/properties.

TO BE READ SIXTH WEEK:

Bealer, "Universals and Properties, and
Putnam, "On Properties," both in
Laurence and Macdonald, pp. 131-162.

7th Week: Oct. 4-8: *Universals: Historical Introduction to the Problems.*

Some Topics:

1. The universal as a certain kind of identity.
2. What are the problems of "universality."
3. Abstract identities and the discovery of Science and of the power of reason.
4. Classical Realism and the rise of Nominalism.

TO BE READ SEVENTH WEEK:

Schoedinger, pp. 1-15, 23-81.
Armstrong, Chapter 1
Moreland, Chapter 1.

Take Home exam, no class, on Oct.13th. (Turn in on 18th)

8th Week, Oct. 11-15: *Universals: Russell and Husserl. Resemblance Arguments.*

Some Topics:

1. Summary of arguments **against** universals.
2. Some famous modern arguments **for** the existence of universals.
3. Can resemblance replace identity in understanding universals? Formally valid deduction requires identities.

TO BE READ EIGHTH WEEK:

Schoedinger, pp. 94-101 (Husserl) & 114-119 (Russell)
and 191-211 (Price)

9th Week, Oct. 18-22: *Universals: Dismissals of
Universals in terms of language.*

Some Topics:

1. The many ways language has been used to "explain away" universals.
2. The basic failure. Why Semantic Ascent Fails in ontology.

TO BE READ NINTH WEEK:

Schoedinger, pp. 135-155 (Lazerowitz), pp. 156-169
(Quine, reread), pp. 232-247 (Carnap), and pp.
304-325 (Donagan).

Willard, "Why Semantic Ascent Fails." (handout)

10th Week, Oct. 25-29: *Universals: Armstrong's Positive
Argument.*

NO CLASS MEETING ON OCT. 27. MADE UP AT END OF COURSE.

TO BE READ TENTH WEEK:

Armstrong, Universals etc., Chapters 2, 3 and 5
Moreland, Universals, Chapters 2-6

11th Week, Nov. 1-5: *Universals: What Armstrong's Positive
Argument Amounts to, and How Moreland Disagrees with
Him. Problems of Exemplification (Predication) and
Naturalism.*

TO BE READ ELEVENTH WEEK: **No new readings. Try to catch up
and review.**

12th Week, Nov. 8-12: *Universals: Moreland's Positive
Argument. Universals proven, Naturalism refuted. What
Plato Knew. Substance--the basic phenomena surrounding
it. Identity again.*

TO BE READ TWELFTH WEEK:

Selections from Aristotle and Locke (Handout)
McCann, Locke's "No Theory" Theory of Substance
(handout)

13th Week, Nov. 15-19: *Wiggins Understanding of Substance. Wiggins and Aristotle. Willard's View Compared. Universals (Essences) and the Identity of Substances. "Tropes" and Substances.*

TO BE READ THIRTEENTH WEEK:

Campbell, "The Metaphysics of Abstract Particulars,"
in Laurence and Macdonald, pp. 351-363
Willard, "Mereological Essentialism Restricted."
(Handout)
Leibniz, Brief Selections (handout)
Kripke, *Naming and Necessity*

14th Week, Nov. 22-26: *Concepts and Arguments in Ontology.*

Topics:

1. What are Concepts. How related to universals. Do they exist? Do they have properties? Are the properties of a certain kind? Is there knowledge of them? If so, *how* are they known?
2. "Location" problems (Jackson).
3. Why should concepts be thought basic to arguments about what exists? Are they really?
4. The idea of "rigid designation" and the ontology thereof.
5. Logical relations, psychologism and ontology.

TO BE READ FOURTEENTH WEEK:

Kripke, *Naming and Necessity* (continued), Willard, "A Crucial Error in Epistemology," "The Paradox of Logical Psychologism: Husserl's Way Out," "How Concepts Relate the Mind to its Objects." (Handouts)

15th Week, Nov. 29-Dec. 3: Kripke and the ontology of names and concepts. Some remarks on Hilary Putnam's *Ethics Without Ontology*. What an idea! Pragmatism and Ontology.

Topics:

1. Concepts must have properties, relations, powers.
2. Concepts and reference: How related.'
3. Concepts in no sense prior for philosophy
4. Cartesian illusions in ontology.
5. The modern embarrassments around Ontology.

6. What exactly is "ethics"? Does "ethics" exist and have a nature? (See page 23 of Putnam)
7. If not, how can Putnam's title and claim be intelligible?
8. If so, Could "the world" or "everything else" be different without limit and ethics remain what it is? Does there have to be a world, and a world of a particular kind, if there is to be ethics?
9. The metaphysics of mind and qualities presupposed by Putnam's "Pragmatism." His ontology after all.—
10. Okay, so qualities, you say, don't belong to things independently of mind. How, exactly, do they belong to things dependently on mind? Now there's an ontology for you: the hidden essence of all things to which Pragmatism constantly appeals while denying it. No doubt that is "the way things really are" for "the God's eye view."
11. The Ontology of Nietzsche, Putnam, Pragmatism, Postmodernism, Deconstruction: The mind, language, history, etc. makes the "identities" or "objects" which we deal in consciousness and in life. That, then, is the ultimate structure of the world we know and live in: its "eternal essence." It is precisely the ontology necessary to ethics as Putnam himself understands ethics.

TO BE READ FIFTEENTH WEEK:

No additional readings. Catch up on past assignments. Prepare for Final.'

A review session for final. 4PM on Dec. 6. Room tba.

Final Exam: Dec.8, 4:30-6:30PM

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Outline of topics for first six weeks:

- A. Introduction to the course:
1. What Ontology ("Metaphysics") is.
 2. Three ways of approaching and doing Ontology:
Apologia for "1st principles" approach.
 3. Some things that are known:
"Particularism" (Chisholm) as a method in Ontology
 4. What an **object** is.
- B. **Being as being-the-same-as:** Identity and Difference.
1. Can Identity be defined?
 2. Is there a general criterion of identity (or difference)—especially, is sameness of qualities useable as a general criterion of sameness?
 3. How can identity statements be meaningful, true **and** significant for knowledge. Distinction between sense and reference (denotation)—Frege.
 4. Some ways in which identity and difference involve each other? Does identity **imply** difference? (Johnson)
 5. Conceptions closely related to identity and difference. Lecture handout.
 6. Identity, difference and separability: The classical "Theory of Distinctions." Suarez and Descartes.
- C. **Being as existing or being-real:**
1. Statement and discussion of the three points which emerge from reflection upon the history of discussions about what existence (being) is or about what it is **to be**. High points.
 2. Distinctions between being and essence.
 3. Illustrations from the history of philosophy (Plato to Hume and Kant)
 4. Analytical discussion of three recent accounts of existence (being)—A. E. Taylor, Moore (Russell), W. V. O. Quine, Moreland.
<A comment on Heidegger.>
 5. Statement and clarification of a **criterion** (not a definition) of existence or non-existence of an object. Necessary and sufficient conditions under which any 'object' (as specified) is, exists, or is real.

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Further comments on existence:

To think of an object (Pegasus, Hornboy) as not existing is to think of it as having no properties at all, and therefore as not having the particular properties under which it is thought (sings, horsiness, etc.)

To think of an object which does not exist is to think of an object which, in fact, has no properties, including the ones under which it is thought.

You can think of something which does exist as not existing, and think of something which does not exist as existing. We do it all the time.

Hume was quite wrong in saying that to think of something and to think of it as existing are the same thing. That is just another a priori conclusion on his part, drawn from his mistaken theory of perceptions (impressions and ideas).

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Properties are respects in which objects can differ or resemble.

This is not a definition of “property,” but a true statement about properties. As a definition it would surely be circular, since we could hardly define “difference” or “resemblance” without reference to properties.

A property differs from a part in the following way: If a property F belongs to both a and b, and a is totally destroyed, b may remain undisturbed, unchanged. But if P is a part of a and of b, then if a is totally destroyed, b is damaged, and no longer exists as a whole. For example, two living units that share a kitchen or two animals that share a bodily part, as sometimes occurs.

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Question: **Why does something exist, rather than nothing?** This is a famous philosophical question, classically formulated by Leibniz (in “Principles of Nature and Grace”), but see also Milton K. Munitz, *The Mystery of Existence*, New York University Press, 1974, and many other writings. (Most famously, perhaps, Martin Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*.)

It is as reasonable question why any given thing exists, e.g., Mudd Hall of Philosophy. To wonder why there is anything at all, instead of “nothing,” seems like a prejudice in favor of nothing. Why would it not be equally puzzling if nothing existed? Of course in that case there would be no questions and no questioners, but since we do exist we can ask the question. The question as to why something exists, even the whole physical universe, seems to be answerable only in terms of something else. If there were nothing there would be no “something else.”

The project of *deducing the categories* is a systematic way of approaching the question of what kinds of things there are and of providing a framework for investigating the many “interesting problems” that draw people into ontological (“metaphysical”) inquiries.

A natural line of thought, which presents itself to many people, starts out from the ordinary *physical objects* that surround us, including living bodies of humans and animals. It asks whether or not there are “things” (“objects”) other than ordinary physical objects.

A first gambit in response to this question discovers elements or constituents of ordinary physical objects that are not themselves ordinary physical objects.

These constituents might be *particulars* (individuating, unique, non-repeatable constituents) and *universals* (generalizable, non-unique, repeatable constituents). Aristotle starts this line of analysis with his first (three-fold) list of categories: What is present in, predicable, neither present in nor predicable. (See chapter 2 of his *The Categories*.) Dobbin is neither present in nor predicable of any other thing. Horsiness is predicable of Dobbin (and of Seabiscuit, War Admiral, etc. etc.) Whiteness is present in Dobbin, and in him alone. It is an “abstract particular” or “trope,” and cannot exist outside of Dobbin. Each white thing has its own “whiteness.” Only what is neither present in nor predicable of any other thing (Aristotle calls this “primary” substance) has the type of independence that he elsewhere ascribes to substance, though this is a point not clearly made out by him.

Ordinary physical objects always have other ordinary physical objects as parts: roots and leaves on a tree, for example. However, it might be that ultimately the parts of physical objects are not themselves (ordinary) physical objects: quarks and strings, for example, or even atoms or force fields. When it comes to the question of the ultimate constituents of ordinary physical objects, there is not insignificant lines of thought that take them to be (somehow) “mental” or “spiritual.” Berkeley and A. E. Taylor do this in one way, and those who “blame it on Heisenberg do it in another way.

Questions come up about the totality of ordinary physical objects, the physical universe. Is it itself a physical object? Spinoza and Taylor, again, hold that it is not. As for various reasons, it seems that the physical universe must have had a beginning (a point disputed in various quarters), it must have originated from nothing—a surprising thing for a physical object to do, to say the least—or from something that was not “physical” in any sense that the physical universe is.

These suggest some of the “interesting problems” that come up when we start our thinking, in systematic ontology, from “ordinary physical objects.” Of course there is no reason why we should have to start there, but at some point we would have to, in any case, come back to ordinary physical objects to fit them into our systematic ontology. But of course many outstanding ontologists (Parmenides, Plato, phenomenologists and constructionists of various kinds) have rejected their existence. And many have thought that if they are all that exist, then most of the interesting things in human life do not.

U.S.C. Fall 2010
 Philosophy 460
 Mr. Willard

Review Questions
 For First Mid-term
“Take home”

A. Possible essay questions:

1. State and briefly explain the more important philosophic issues having to do with identity and difference, and take a reasoned position on whether or not identity can be defined.
2. With the Johnson and Frege selections (in the packet with “Introduction to Elements of General Ontology”) in mind, discuss the ways in which identity and difference might be said to ‘involve’ one another contextually, or in statements or judgments of identity (or difference).
3. Beginning from Aristotle's insight that to know what an object--e.g. the Loch Ness Monster--is is not to know that it is, sketch out some main points in the history of the essence (what) / existence (that) distinction up to G. E. Moore. Include an explanation of Aquinas' view that existence is an ‘act’ of the essence of an object.
4. Explain and evaluate Quine's essay, "On What There Is," as a contribution to the understanding of the distinction between existing and not existing. Contrast Quine’s view of that distinction with Willard’s
5. Advance, with appropriate clarifications and reasons, **your own view** of the difference between there being unicorns and there not being unicorns.
6. Explain the approach to Ontology (Metaphysics?) as a field of knowledge and inquiry which has been set forth in the lectures and handouts, and provide any criticisms of it which seem appropriate to you.
7. On the first page of “Introduction to Elements of General Ontology”—you have a statement by Aristotle that “there is a science which investigates being as being and the attributes which belong to this in virtue of its own nature.” (Repeated on the next page with the Greek.) Give your understanding of what he has in mind with this. What are the prospects of “science” as we know it today—any particular science (physics, mathematics, psychology) or group of particular sciences— discovering the nature of being as such and an exhaustive list of the kinds of things that exist? Could science as we know it possibly obviate the need for systematic ontology in Aristotle’s sense?

B. Possible short-answer questions:

Briefly compare and contrast the members of the following pairs. (No more than 4 or 5 sentences, please.) If there is no difference, in your opinion, between the members of any given pair, say why you think there is no difference.

8. Not being red / not being (Or: being non-red / non-being)
9. A name / a description (as contrasted by Russell and Quine)
10. Thinking of something which does not exist / thinking of something as not existing
11. Identity / resemblance
12. Synthetic a priori proposition / modal distinction
13. The real / the imaginary (A. E. Taylor, p. 24 <handout> and class discussion)
14. The principle of identity / the identity of indiscernibles
15. The distinction of reasoned reason/reasoning reason (according to Suarez).
16. The 'first principles' approach to Ontology / the 'interesting problems' approach
17. Objective being / "subjective" being (Veitch, Hamilton)
18. Distinguishability / separability
19. Being / being 'perceived' (Berkeley/Taylor)
20. Utilizing Suarez's examples (as discussed in class) draw a diagram showing the location of the modal distinction, and a diagram giving Descartes's view of the modal distinction and the distinction of reason. No commentary, just a clearly labeled diagram of each.

On the take-home exam you will be asked to write on 2 of 3 questions selected by the instructor from 1 - 7, and on 3 of 5 selected from 8 - 20. When you sit to write the exam, open books and handouts may be used, but no notes, not even lecture notes or notes in books and in handouts. On your honor.

The exam will be given out at next meeting (Oct. 11th) and your responses are to be turned in at class on Oct. 18th.

Mid-Term Exam
(Take Home)

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Fall 2010

Mr. Willard

A. Write on two of the following three questions:

1. With the Johnson and Frege selections in mind, discuss the ways in which identity and difference might be said to 'involve' one another contextually, or in statements or judgments of identity (or difference), without logically 'implying' one another.

2. Explain and evaluate Quine's essay, "On What There Is," as a contribution to the understanding of the distinction between existing and not existing. Contrast Quine's view of that distinction with Willard's

3. On the first page of "Introduction to Elements of General Ontology"—you have a statement by Aristotle that "there is a science which investigates being as being and the attributes which belong to this in virtue of its own nature." (Repeated on the next page with the Greek.) Give your understanding of what he has in mind with this. What are the prospects of "science" as we know it today—any particular science (physics, mathematics, psychology) or group of particular sciences— discovering the nature of being as such and an exhaustive list of the kinds of things that exist? Could science as we know it possibly obviate the need for systematic ontology in Aristotle's sense?

B. Write on each of the following five, briefly comparing and contrasting the members of the following pairs. (Half page or so handwritten.) If there is no difference, in your opinion, between the members of any given pair, say why you think there is no difference.

1. Not being red / not being (Or: being non-red / non-being)
2. Thinking of something which does not exist / thinking of something as not existing
3. The distinction of reasoned reason/reasoning reason (according to Suarez)
4. The 'first principles' approach to Ontology / the 'interesting problems' approach
5. Utilizing Suarez's examples (as discussed in class) draw a diagram showing the location of the modal distinction for Suarez, and a diagram giving Descartes's view of the modal distinction and the distinction of reason. No commentary, just a clearly labeled diagram of each.

Hand-written or scratched-out and corrected are fine. If I can't read it I'll have you read it to me. Concentrate on thinking, up to the last minute, not on making nice.

Turn in at class on Oct. 20.

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Fall 2007

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR FINAL EXAM

A. Possible essay questions:

1. Describe the project of a theory of categories, and how it fits into the two main tasks of systematic ontology. Contrasts Aristotle's categories with the theory organized around predication, presented in class.
2. State the theory (of Allaire and others) that there is a constituent (a "bare particular") in individuals other than their properties, properties that might be shared with other individuals. And explain the arguments of Armstrong (Chap. 4) and Moreland (Chap. 7) in favor of such a constituent.
3. What is the problem of universals. How can one describe the kind of entity whose existence is in question? Does it have anything essentially to do with language? Explain.
4. Evaluate the argument (Chap. 7) that culminates in Armstrong's conclusion: "The Universals theory seems ahead of even the best Trope theory. (p. 139)
5. What would you say is the main or most weighty objection to extreme nominalism, as stated in Moreland chapter 2 or Armstrong chapter 1 (pp. 8 and following) Can the objection be shown to be harmless?
6. Summarize and evaluate Moreland's argument for the position he refers to as "Traditional Realism." (Chapters 5 and 6)
7. Explain and evaluate the prospects of systematic ontology as a possible field of knowledge.
8. Is there a significant case to be made for "Substance Dualism"? Distinguish from "Property Dualism."

B. Possible short answer questions:

9. Russell's argument that resemblance cannot be a complete account of universals. (Schoedinger, pp. 116-118)
10. Quine's way of avoiding commitment to the existence of universals. (Schoedinger, 162-166)
11. Aristotle on "primary" and "secondary" substance.
12. The difference between Locke and Hume on Substance.
13. Moreland's theory of existence. (pp. 134-139)
14. Particularism in the theory of knowledge. (Chisholm)
15. "Roast Pig" philosophizing—Hume and Nietzsche.
16. Why "Semantic Ascent" fails as a philosophical strategy.
17. The difference (Moreland) between "Moderate Nominalism" and "Minimalist Realism."
18. The significance of "reduction" for systematic ontology.
19. Identity and the distinction of reason

Your class notes should guide you to where in the texts and handouts these matters are discussed. The test will be "take home," open books and handouts of printed matter only. Do not use the lecturers notes handed out during writing of the test.

U.S.C. Fall 2010
 Philosophy 460
 Mr. Willard

Review Questions
 For Final Exam
 (“Take Home”?)

A. Possible essay questions:

1. Describe the project of a theory of categories, and how it fits into the two main tasks of systematic ontology. Contrasts Aristotle’s categories with the theory organized around predication, presented in class.
2. State the theory (of Allaire and others) that there is a constituent (a “bare particular”) in individuals other than their properties, properties that might be shared with other individuals. And explain the arguments of Armstrong (Chap. 4) and Moreland (Chap. 7) in favor of such a constituent.
3. What is **the problem** of universals. How can one describe the kind of entity whose existence is in question? Does it have anything essentially to do with language? Explain. You may wish to review Moreland Chapter 1.
4. Evaluate the argument (Chap. 7) that culminates in Armstrong’s conclusion: “The Universals theory seems ahead of even the best Trope theory. (p. 139)
5. What would you say is the main or most weighty objection to extreme nominalism, as stated in Moreland chapter 2 or Armstrong chapter 1 (pp. 8 and following) Can the objection be shown to be harmless?
6. Summarize and evaluate Moreland’s argument for the position he refers to as “Traditional Realism.” (Chapters 5 and 6)
7. Explain Willard’s view of the identity of substances through time and change. (See “Mereological Essentialism Restricted,” pp. 137-143 and lectures)
8. Is there any good reason to think that the “external world” exists? (Moore handouts and lectures. “Intentionality” and “objects,” handouts/lectures.
9. Explain Kripke’s argument against the “identity thesis” concerning the mind and the brain (pain and a chemical state of the brain). Is it a sound argument? Why or why not?

B. Possible short answer questions:

10. Russell’s argument that resemblance cannot provide a complete account of universals. (Schoedinger, pp. 116-118)
11. Armstrong’s dismissal of Russell’s “resemblance” argument. (pp. 55-56)
12. Quine’s way of avoiding commitment to the existence of universals. (Schoedinger, 162-166)
13. Aristotle on “primary” and “secondary” substance.
14. Brentano and Sartre on “intentionality” and the mental. (Handouts).
15. Moreland’s theory of existence. (pp. 134-139)
16. Particularism in the theory of knowledge. (Chisholm)
17. “Roast Pig” philosophizing—Hume and Nietzsche.
18. Why “Semantic Ascent” fails as a philosophical strategy.
19. The difference (Moreland) between “Moderate Nominalism” and “Minimalist Realism.”²⁰, “Rigid designator.”
21. The significance of “laws of nature” for the existence of universals. (Armstrong, *Universals*, pp. 81, 101, 138-139, and compare Moreland pp. 43-44)

FINAL EXAM

I. Write on four of the following five questions:

1. Describe the project of a theory of categories, and how it fits into the two main tasks of systematic ontology. Contrasts Aristotle's categories with the theory organized around predication, presented in class.
2. What is **the problem** of universals? How can one describe the kind of entity whose existence is in question? Does it have anything essentially to do with language? Explain. You may wish to review Moreland Chapter 1.
3. What would you say is the main or most weighty objection to extreme nominalism, as stated in Moreland chapter 2 or Armstrong chapter 1 (pp. 8 and following) Can the objection be shown to be harmless?
4. Explain Willard's view of the identity of substances through time and change. (See "Mereological Essentialism Restricted," pp. 137-143, and lectures) How would you relate this view to Kripke's view of the essentiality of origins (pp. 110-116 <with long footnotes>, 140-142) and of the nature of "natural kinds."
5. Is there any good reason to think that the "external world" exists? (Moore handouts and lectures. "Intentionality" and "objects," handouts/lectures.)

II. Write a brief paragraph on four of the following five:

6. Armstrong's dismissal of Russell's "resemblance" argument. (pp. 55-56)
7. Brentano and Sartre on "intentionality" and the mental.
8. Why "Semantic Ascent" fails as a philosophical strategy.
9. "Rigid designator."
10. The difference (Moreland) between "Moderate Nominalism" and "Minimalist Realism."

Open books and any printed handouts during writing. Nothing else.

Exams due at my office Dec. 15 at noon. You can turn them in in my box any time before that.

The “Linguistic Turn” and the Problem of Universals:

In the 20th Century much of Anglo-American Philosophy turned to “language” in a new way to resolve or dissolve the “Problem of Universals.” This was largely the result of the “discovery” that philosophical problems in general were caused by misunderstandings of language. The older Nominalism (of Ockham and Hume, for example) had tried to cash the universal (whiteness, squareness, etc.) in by saying it is just “the” word (“white,” “square,” etc.) that unifies white, square, etc. things with one another in the peculiar way that consists in their all being white, square, etc. For reasons that by this point in the course are (hopefully) obvious, that just won’t do. The sense of “word” in which all the white or square things are designated by the ‘same’ word is a sense in which ‘the’ word in question must be a universal or abstract entity, a ‘type’ and not a ‘token’. (Recall Peirce on this distinction.) It is repeatable and hence not an individual.

In the 20th Century numerous philosophers (especially Carnap and Quine) held, instead, that admitting universals into our thought or language was a choice or decision about which language we would select and use for our purposes. (Pragmatism) The basic idea was that if such a language was “useful” (or possibly the most useful on available), then we should (or could) select it for use. (See the readings in Schroedinger, *The Problem of Universals*.)

But we should note the following with reference to this “linguistic turn”:

- A. The “problem” (of the unity of sets, or of natural classes, or of what it is for many things to be P, remains in full force after we have turned our focus upon language. What, for example, is it for many words or sentences to be the same or to have a nature? Simple grammar, not to mention logic and the fancier forms of linguistic theory, forces these familiar questions upon us once again, and Quine etc. cannot escape them. So nothing is really gained for escaping the essential problem of universals by making the turn.
- B. What is the standard by which we “choose” a language? – Usefulness, efficiency, etc.? And why does that not simply beg the ontological question (i.e., of whether there are universals or not)? If there are universals, would not any language which fails to mention or otherwise deal in or with them be, by that very fact inefficient? Not as useful as is necessary? And if there are none, would not any language which mentions or deals in them be mistaken?
- C. Why should one assume that one must go through language and choice of language to deal with the ontological problem? Or that one can do that? What is it, exactly, about language and reality that makes such a path possible or necessary? Are we assuming that somehow we know language better than what language is about? (Just the old Cartesian/Lockean assumption in a new form: Now a “new way of words” in place of the old “way of Ideas.”) But surely we do not know language any better, and perhaps not as well, as other things. Hasn’t that now been amply born out by more recent philosophizing?

On such matters see my see p. 18 of my *Logic and the Objectivity of Knowledge* and my “Why Semantic Ascent Fails,” *Metaphilosophy*, 1983, pp. 276-290.

DALLAS WILLARD

Succession and substance:

Two main reasons why succession (contra Hume) cannot replace identity in substance:

(1). Succession requires an identical “environment” in which it occurs and within which the successive events or things stand in relation to one another. Otherwise one only gets disconnected existence in no order. Succession is an order.

The experience of succession requires identity of the “experiencer.” Kant. T. H. Green. A. E. Taylor, *Elements of Metaphysics*, pp. 158-163.

(2). Acquired dispositions require identity between what undergoes experience, exercise or causal impact and what, as a result, has the acquired disposition: i.e. can now remember what was previously seen. It is this point about acquired dispositions that makes memory relevant to personal identity.

On Dualism:

Basic idea: that there are two radically different kinds of things. Plato and Descartes are the paradigmatic philosophical dualists. Both believed the mind to be radically distinct from the body, and Plato adds a radical distinction between being (forms/universals) and becoming (particulars). Normally dualism today is taken to refer to the mind/body relation.

See the Richard Taylor comic book portrayal of various positions on the mind/body relation. (handout)

Property dualism is the view that mental properties (sensations, thoughts, emotions, decisions) are not identical with any physical properties.

See Searle’s attempt to hold this position while remaining a “naturalist,” and my “A Non-reductive and Non-eliminative Physicalism?”

Substance dualism is the view that the mind with its properties is a radically different kind of thing than any physical object, including the human brain or body, and that its existence is at least possible independently of the human body. (Plato’s *Phaedo*, Descartes’ *Vith Meditation*) See my “Intentionality and the Substance of the Self.”

Near Death experiences and the mind’s independence of the body. (handout on Moody’s book)

The origin of the physical universe and non-physical substance.

If the physical universe was not and then was, either it was caused by something non-physical or not caused at all (originated from nothing).

The latter alternative has absolutely nothing to favor it. And certainly if it were true the idea of the Causal Closure of the Physical realm is shot dead, for then we would have physical events with no cause at all. That certainly contradicts the view that all physical events have physical cause. The former alternative requires the existence, at least at the time of the physical universe's origin, of a non-physical substance adequate in nature to produce the physical universe. (See Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Book XII, and the first two "Ways" of proving God's existence in St. Thomas Aquinas.)

Contemporary physical theory (cosmology) holds that the physical universe was not and then was.

This also follows from the impossibility of an infinite causal regress back of any present event: the entire state of the universe at present, of this leaf falling from that tree.

It seems then that there is (or at least was) a non-physical substance that originated the physical universe, and that it has a magnitude and nature sufficient to do that. Infinite? Maybe not. But pretty big, one must say.

Phil. 460, Nov. 28, 2007

The final exam was officially scheduled for Dec. 12, 4:30-6:30 PM. But.....

Please leave your exam in my mail box in MHP 113 by 1 PM on the 13th.

I will hold a session to answer questions about the questions on Monday the 10th, 4-5:30.
If not in this room, somewhere in this building.

The exam will be handed out at the end of class on the 5th.

Kripke's three arguments regarding the "Identity Thesis" about mind and body:

#1. Descartes takes the position *that the mind or person is distinct from the body*.

The Identity Thesis says that mind and body are identical, not distinct: (D = B)

Kripke assumes "rigid designation" for "Descartes" and "Descartes' body."
(p. 145 of *NAMING AND NECESSITY*)

Given that, "D = B," if true, is necessarily true.

But that means it **could not** be the case that we might have D and not B or B and not D. (Do we not, at Descartes death, have B but (possibly) not D.)

To the contrary, Kripke holds, it seems possible (conceivable, imaginable) that "D & not B" or (and?) "Not D and B" could be the case.

But then (D = B) is not necessarily true; and, if not necessarily true, it is not true.
(Any true identity statement with rigid designators is necessarily true.)

#2. The Identity Thesis can be a claim about a particular mental state (a pain, for example) and a particular brain state. A = B, shall we say. Again, rigid designation assumed.

Then if "A = B" is true, it must be necessarily true. (p. 146, lines 12-13)

Then we could not have A and not B or B and not A.

But again, it *seems* we very well could. ("*Prima facie*, it would seem that it is at least logically possible that B should have existed... without Jones feeling any pain at all, and thus without the presence of A." (lines 5-9))

But then (working back through the premises) "A = B" (the position of the identity theorists) must be false. If it is not necessarily true (given rigid designation) it cannot be true at all.

#3. The type-type identity theorists asserts the identity of a type of mental state (e.g. pain) with a type of brain state (e.g. “C-fiber stimulation”). Pp. 148f

Here again “P = CF” involves rigid designators (like “Heat is Molecular Motion.”). Bottom p. 148-149.

So “P = CF” is necessarily true, if it is true at all. “The identity theorists is committed to the view that there could not be C-fiber stimulation which was not a pain, nor a pain which was not a C-fiber stimulation.” P. 149, lines 15-17.

But, Kripke says: “These consequences are certainly surprising and counterintuitive...” (line 18) It seems there could be.

That is, it seems we could have one type of state (mental) occurring without the other (brain state).

The Identity Theorist might reply that the brain state could be only contingently mental. (149-150)

However: To the reply that the brain state or ‘B’ might be only contingently mental (as Ben Franklin only happened to be the inventor of bifocals), Kripke states that there is no “distance” between the mental state e.g., the pain) and what it is, as there is between the inventor of bifocals and who—which person—is the inventor. He points out that “in the case of mental phenomena there is no ‘appearance’ beyond the mental phenomenon itself.” (154, line 25-26) What it is could not “sneak around behind it.”

Kripke summarizes: “No identity theorist seems to me to have made a convincing argument against the intuitive view that this <that all mental facts are ‘ontologically dependent’ upon material facts> is not the case.” P. 155

Remarks on Hilary Putnam's *Ethics without Ontology* (Harvard Un. Press, 2004)

One wants to ask immediately, how could there be ethics without and ontology? What could it possibly mean? Is the idea that an "ethics" makes no demands upon existence? That no matter what kind of universe there is, ethics exists and makes valid points and demands such as it is now widely thought to. That, for example, there would still be ethics in a universe without consciousness or persons? This seems wildly implausible.

Rather, Putnam's point is something like this: That ethics, in the sense of a type of practice, and of a type rational understanding or interpretation of the practice, does not require, for it (ethics) to be fully functioning, a theory or understanding of what there is or of what it is for something to be (our two main questions for Systematic Ontology).

Putnam's position is intended by him to be defensive of ethics: to set aside theories of reality (positivism, naturalism, materialism) according to which ethics is impossible as a field of knowledge, of rationality of thought and practice. He adopts the position that the view that there is a way things are, independently of how they are described in some language—especially, that there is a distinction between fact and value—is not defensible, and, in some respects, as he often says, is just silly.

His arguments for his position are drawn from the philosophy of language—and, by extension, of thought or consciousness.

- (1) He holds that there is no one correct description of "reality," but several optional ways of talking in any given situation, depending upon how we choose to "take things." There is no one necessary description, no "God's eye view."
- (2) Not every objective truth (not all "objectivity") is a matter of corresponding objects being arranged in a certain way. Rational controls on discourse and practice also come from the social context within which language functions.

These points Putnam takes to be established simply by examining how language works. Granting that these points hold up, any claims about "reality" based solely upon their denials must be regarded as unsupported. (They might still be true, but why think so? No reason from within Putnam's assumptions. No "direct" access to things as they are.) In any case, he thinks, moral life and discourse does not depend upon settling such issues.

It must be pointed out, of course, that he is, precisely, letting us know "how things really are" with reference to language, thought, rationality, and whatever world there is in relation to them. His entire case rests upon that. For example, his claim that language and thought can be rational without corresponding realities. A similar point is true with reference to all forms of Pragmatism, of which his is only one. The Pragmatist might try to claim that their own theories are not account of how things are with thought and reality, but that surely is not their tone. They certainly do not seem to be saying that their view is only one that "works" for the time being.

Pretty clearly there could not be ethics, as practice or understanding, unless certain things were true of reality:

1. Ethics requires the possibility of pre-meditation of good and evil. The universe must be one in what all that goes into foresight and intention exists.
2. It must be a universe in which the body responds to thought and consciousness and emotion and feeling.
3. One in which particular events occur.
4. Events involving individuals and their qualities and relations.
5. And laws governing such events in terms of their properties and relations
6. Identity and causation must be involved.
7. Of course Putnam himself presupposes all of this in one special case—thought or language and its “objects” formed by selectivity and choice of conceptual framework.
8. The constructionist/pragmatic view is an elaborate ontological system: specifying some things that exist and their organization.
9. The universe as a whole must be the sort of universe that can accommodate that system.

But one doesn't have to have a systematic theory of all this to practice the moral (or immoral life) and to have a limited understanding of it sufficient for living.

Final Exam

Phil. 460
Fall 2007

Mr. Willard

A. Write on three of the following five questions:

1. Describe the project of a theory of categories, and how it fits into the two main tasks of systematic ontology. Contrasts Aristotle's categories with the theory organized around predication, presented in class.
2. State the theory (of Allaire and others) that there is a constituent (a "bare particular") in individuals other than their properties, properties that might be shared with other individuals. And explain the arguments of Armstrong (Chap. 4) and Moreland (Chap. 7) in favor of such a constituent
3. Summarize and evaluate Moreland's argument for the position he refers to as "Traditional Realism." (Chapters 5 and 6)
4. Explain and evaluate the prospects of systematic ontology as a possible field of knowledge.
5. Is there a significant case to be made for "Substance Dualism"? Distinguish from "Property Dualism"?

B. Write on five of the following seven questions: (a paragraph each):

11. Quine's way of avoiding commitment to the existence of universals.
12. Aristotle on "primary" and "secondary" substance.
13. The difference between Locke and Hume on Substance.
14. Particularism in the theory of knowledge.
15. "Roast Pig" philosophizing—Hume and Nietzsche.
16. Why "semantic ascent" fails as a philosophical strategy.
17. The significance of "reduction" for systematic ontology.

When you sit to write the exam, open books and handouts of printed matter only may be used, but no notes, not even lecture notes or notes in books and in handouts. On your honor. **Please leave your exam in my mail box in MHP 113 by 1 PM on the 13th of December.**