

Introduction

What is metaphysics?

As part of the Protestant Reform, Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, and with it metaphysics generally, fell, or was brought into, disrepute. The reason for this is a 'paradigm-shift' in the understanding of what it is for a thing to be what it is.

Think for a moment yourself back into your childhood experience. Children often play by imagining that they are doctors, nurses, mothers, fathers, cowboys and Indians etc. Remember what happened what happened when you refused to 'be' what you were supposed to 'be' – say Indian. You challenged the authority of whoever had tacitly or aloud determined 'what you were'. By this challenge you risked disrupting the game, if the other (or the others) was (were) not prepared to accept you as a cowboy. By challenging what you were, you thus challenged not only who was in charge of the game, and the integrity of the game itself. Of course change in leadership could happen without the game being disrupted – games indeed often are about that – but it all would depend on the parties involved. That is why you liked to play with some and not with others.

Parents like their children to play, also because it is the best way for them to learn things that cannot be taught, but which are of absolute importance in life.

The Protestants had challenged who they were (quasi subjects of the Pope), and who was in charge of the game (the Pope). They started playing a new game, in which they were the subjects of the Prince, who thus was in charge of the game. This is how the Europe of Nation-States became consolidated over a century (1536 – 1642). In so far as metaphysics had been the way in which 'being' was understood, explained and analyzed in the old game, it was now looked upon with suspicion. A suspicion, in fact, that in the case of Hobbes (*Leviathan*, IV, 46), grew to a condemnation of it as treacherous, because it gave the subjects of the Sovereign a way to know being (know what is) which were not dependent on his authority.

Hobbes says metaphysics consists in right limiting of the most universal significations, such as *body, time, place, matter, form, essence, subject, substance, accident, power, act, finite, infinite, quantity, quality, motion, action, passion* "and divers others, necessary to the explaining of a mans Conceptions concerning the Nature and Generation of Bodies."(p. 688).

He also gives two senses to metaphysics:

1. It is the books written or placed in the work of Aristotle *after* his natural philosophy
2. But this gives rise to the Schools teaching them as *supernatural* philosophy.

He then links metaphysics with anti-materialism (which he opposes) and with the affirmation of the existence of essences and souls as substantial forms.

Hobbes' politically founded rejection of metaphysics echoes into the general understanding of the subject. It is in fact generally understood to be:

1. It is something that can hardly be understood (dismissive definition).
2. It is about what is beyond the physical (popular definition).
3. It is what comes 'after the *Physics*' (Greek or Syriac editors' definition); i.e. what is in the book, nicknamed '*Meta-physics*', because it in the collected works of Aristotle was put after the book called the *Physics*.

(The order of definitions corresponds to the degrees of familiarity with the subject).

If metaphysics is the content of the books after the physics of Aristotle, we must ask what Aristotle himself thought he was dealing with in these books. He, in fact, gives another three definitions, which it would take another book to explain the identity of:

1. It is *wisdom or knowledge concerning principles and causes* (1/A, 981b).
2. It is the *science of being qua being* (IV/Γ, 1005a14).
3. It is *first philosophy*, the common presupposition for the sciences (VI/E, 1025b1 – 1026a32).

We can say:

4. It is about *what is* and *its reasons (explanations, causes)*
5. It is about:

| | | |
|--------------|--------------|-----------|
| being | το ον | Aristotle |
| substance | ουσια | |
| explanation | αιτιον, αρχη | |
| essence | essentia | Aquinas |
| existence | esse | |
| truth | veritas | |
| actuality | Wirkliches | Stein |
| potentiality | Sein-können | |

6. And about: form, matter, temporality, causality, identity, identification and in general about the subjects of all the entries you find in Aristotle's dictionary (V/Δ).

Introduction continued.

Metaphysics also being the content of the books that in the edition of Aristotle's texts follow the books on physics (natural philosophy), how does Aristotle define his subject matter? He defines it in a threefold manner:

3. It is *wisdom* or *knowledge concerning principles and causes* (1/A, 981b25-982a19).
4. It is the *science of being qua being* (IV/Γ, 1004a34–1005a17).
7. It is *first philosophy*, the common presupposition for the sciences (VI/E, 1025b1 – 1026a32).

1.

Defining the subject-matter in relation to other branches of knowledge, and in relation to what is generally thought.

We have said in the *Ethics* what the difference is between art and science and the other kindred faculties; but the point of our present discussion is this, that all men suppose what is called wisdom to deal with the first causes and the principles of things. This is why, as has been said before, the man of experience is thought to be wiser than the possessors of any perception whatever, the artist wiser than the men of experience, the master-worker than the mechanic, and the theoretical kinds of knowledge to be more of the nature of wisdom than the productive. Clearly then wisdom is knowledge about certain causes and principles.

Since then we are seeking this knowledge, we must first inquire of what kind are the causes and principles, the knowledge of which is wisdom. If we were to take the notions we have about the wise man, this might perhaps make the answer more evident. We suppose first, then, that the wise man knows all things, as far as possible, although he has not knowledge of each of them individually; secondly, that he who can learn things that are difficult, and not easy for man to know, is wise (sense-perception is common to all, and therefore easy and no mark of wisdom); again, he who is more exact and more capable of teaching the causes is wiser, in every branch of knowledge; and of the sciences, also that which is desirable on its own account and for the sake of knowing it is more of the nature of wisdom than that which is desirable on account of its results, and the superior science is more of the nature of wisdom than the ancillary; for the wise man must not be ordered but must order, and he must not obey another, but the less wise must obey him. (Where nothing else is indicated I use the *Revised Oxford Translation*)

The wise man (1) knows things in general; (2) he can learn difficult (abstract) things; (3) teach what he has learnt as he grasps its principles; (4) knows what is worth knowing for its own sake, and (5) must therefore be obeyed.

Such dealing with the principles and causes of things is what we consider characteristic of the wise man, therefore wisdom, which we here pursue (in the books later called *Metaphysics*), deals with principles and causes in this manner.

2.

Defining the subject matter in relation to other philosophers' understanding of philosophy.

And it is the function of the philosopher to be able to investigate all things. (...) It is obvious then from these considerations too that it belongs to one science to examine being qua being. For all things are either contraries or composed of contraries, and unity and plurality are the starting-points of all contraries. And these belong to one science, whether they have or have not one common notion. (...) Obviously then it is the work of one science to examine being *qua* being, and the attributes which belong to it *qua* being, and the same science will examine not only substances but also their attributes, both those above named and what is prior and posterior, genus and species, whole and part, and the others of this sort.

3.

Defining the subject in transit to the substance-books (7-9/ZHQ)

We are seeking the principles and causes of the things that are, and obviously of things qua being. For there is a cause of health and good condition, and the objects of mathematics have principles and elements and causes, and in general every science which is ratiocinative or at all involves reasoning deals with causes and principles, exact or indeterminate; but all these sciences mark off some particular being – some genus, and inquire into this, but not into being simply nor qua being, not do they offer any discussion of the essences of the things of which they treat; but starting from the essence – some making it plain to the senses, others assuming it as a hypothesis – they then demonstrate, more or less cogently, the essential attributes of the genus with which they deal. It is obvious, therefore, from such a review of the sciences, that there is no demonstration of substance or of the essence, but some other way of revealing it. And similarly the sciences omit the question whether the genus with which they deal exists or does not exist, because it belongs to the same line of thought to show what it is and that it is.

And since natural science, like other sciences, confines itself to one class of beings, i.e. to that sort of substance which has the principle of movement and rest present in itself, evidently it is neither practical or productive. For the principle of production is in the producer – it is either reason or art or some capacity, while the principle of action is in the doer – viz. choice, for that which is done and that which is chosen are the same. Therefore, if all thought is either practical or productive or theoretical, natural science must be theoretical, but it will theorize about such being as admits of being moved, and only about that kind of substance which in respect of its formula is for the most part not separable from matter. (...) That natural science, then, is theoretical, is plain from these considerations. Mathematics also is theoretical; but whether its objects are immovable and separable from matter, is not at present clear; it is clear however, that it considers mathematical objects qua immovable and qua separable from matter. But if there is something which is eternal and immovable and separable, clearly the knowledge of it belongs to a theoretical science, - not, however, to natural science (for natural science deals with certain movable things) nor to mathematics, but to a science prior to both. For natural science deals with things which are inseparable from matter but not immovable, and some parts of mathematics deals with things which are immovable, but precisely not separable, but embodied in matter; while the first science deals with things which are both separable and immovable. Now all causes must be eternal, but especially these; for they are the causes of so much of the divine as appears to us.

I. Classical Metaphysics

Aristotle's understanding of being

Whatever the status of the dictionary of Aristotle (Book D (Delta) or book V of the *Metaphysics*), it is a dictionary of Aristotelian terms of a profound systematic nature. Many terms used throughout the fourteen books of the *Metaphysics* are listed there in an order which may be systematic (it is not alphabetical). So also are some of the terms defining the subject matter of first philosophy (prw/th filosofi/a); the terms 'principle' (arxh\); 'cause' (ai)/tion) and 'being', (to\ o)/n).

About being it is said that:

| In the long version, (using mostly Ross' vocabulary) the term 'being' is said (le/getai) about: | In short, (using mostly Hope's vocabulary) being means: |
|---|---|
| 1. Accidental, occasional or incidental being; being which is according to an occasion: kata\ sumbebhko/j. Something is said to be when it happens to be that way. If for example the musician is a builder, he is so occasionally because he only builds now and then. If he was building all the time, he would be <i>a builder</i> , and it would no longer be true to say that 'the musician is a builder', as he would no longer be a musician. It is not essential to a musician to build; not necessary for him to build in order to be what he is. | 1. Accidental being, i.e. being, that happens to be. |
| 2. Essential being, which is according to itself: kaq)au(to. Something is said to be what it is and this it would not be if it were not. Essential being is said in all the categories (kathgori/a – i.e. according to the agora, according to public accusation or judgement): for example a house is a substance, memory a quality, 3 a quantity. This is what the things are according to themselves, i.e. what they couldn't be without to be what they are, what you could not abstract from them without abstracting their meaning, what they are necessarily. | 2. Essential being, i.e. being that must be. |
| 3. True being (a)lhqe(j); when we say that Socrates is intelligent we imply that it is | 3. True being, i.e. being that is true |

| | |
|---|----------------------------------|
| true that Socrates is intelligent. We use this sense of being when we claim that 2+2 is 4. | |
| 4. About either potentiality (du/namij) or actuality (e)ntelexeia) (or both). We say for example that Socrates is intelligent, both when he is awake and when he is asleep. Being thus can be either actual or potential, still being what it is. | 4. Potentiality and/or actuality |

Perhaps we may understand that being has four ‘dimensions’, not four kinds. It is talked about in four ways: according to something else, according to itself, according to it being revealed to mind and according to it being actual or potential; present or future.

Notes:

Kategoria means ‘according to the agora’: according to the public pronouncements (originally accusation). Traditionally translated as a “predicate”; from pre-dicare - ‘said-about’. The categories are kinds of essential being, kinds of predication. They are said about the thing according to itself, about the thing according to ”what it is for X to be one” (to\ ti/ h)=n [X] ei)=nai). (There is another (longer) list in *Categories* 1b25-27). Here they are listed as:

- What (τι εστι)
- What sort (ποιον)
- How much (ποσον)
- Relative to (προσ τι)
- Doing (ποιειν)
- Undergoing (πασχειν)
- Where (που)
- When (ποτε)

A predicate is not necessarily an accident, though it can be. It is possible to predicate something essential about, say, being in this hall, namely that it is being in a place. When I say that being in a hall is being in a place I imply that it is true whether or not there is anyone. This means that the essence of a thing also is predicated of it, or, to put it another way, that substance is one of the categories.

Aristotle's understanding of being, II

Introduction to the 'Substance-books', VII/Z, 1

The 'substance-books' (VII/Z – VIII/H – IX/Θ), are thought to be an independent treatise. Werner Jaeger and W.D. Ross both agree that Books I/A, IX/K (1-9), XIII/M (9), XIV/N is the earliest form of the course (perhaps taught at the Lyceum over several years and edited by Eudemus). Observation will have it (according to H. Tredennick/Loeb edition) that Books I/A, III/B, IV/Γ, VI/E and (VII/Z – VIII/H – IX/Θ), forms the later stage of the course, the rest of the material being from uncertain dates. Tredennick, indicating that Book V/Δ refers to terms not used in the *Metaphysics*, claims that the dictionary is “evidently a separate and earlier treatise” (p. xxxi).

The opening sentence of Z, 1, seems to refer back to it:

The term 'being' has several senses, which we have classified in our discussion of the number of senses in which terms are used (Revised Oxford Translation).

It could, however, also refer back to the discussion of the many meanings of being in VI/E, 2:

Now, a being as such may be in several ways. One of them, as we saw, is to be accidental; another to be true (nonbeing is to be false); besides these, there is the list of categories, that is, what, of what sort, how much, where, when, and anything else that 'being' as such may mean; also a being may be, as such, either potentially or actually (ROT).

Book VI in fact form a kind of introduction to the substance-books. It argues that among the four senses of being only two are relevant for metaphysics, because it is the science of being *qua* being (ε)πισθ/μhj τὸ ο)ν h(= ο)ν). These are being used about what things are in them selves (essential being) and being used about either potential or actual things. In fact accidental being and being as true has been disqualified during book VI/E, because there is no science of the accidental (of what happens to be), and being as true is not being *qua* being. So, if Metaphysics is, what book IV defines it to be, it must concern being as such (καq)αυτο), whether as actuality (ε)nergiei/a|) or potential (duna/mei). In fact the reason why there is no science of the accidental is that there is no determinate potency we can know that produces them. The causes of accidents qua accidents escape us. But that we can know cannot be explained simply from being. That is why the question how it happens that we can combine and separate in thought – things required in order to know and understand truth – is separate from the question of being as being. This question has later been understood to be concerned with epistemology (from Aristotle's word from science - ε)πισθ/μh).

The start of Book VII/Z begins afresh, however.

There are several senses in which a thing may be said to be, as we pointed out previously in our book on the various senses of words; for in one sense it means what a thing is or a 'this', and in another sense it means that a thing is of a certain quality or quantity or has some such predicate asserted of it (ROT).

'Being' has many meanings, as we have previously pointed out in our account of the various ways in which things are said. For 'being' means, on the one hand, what a thing is or a 'this something' [or subject]; on the other hand, it means that a thing is such, or so much, or any of the other types of predicates (Hope).

The term 'being' has several senses, which we have classified in our discussion of the number of senses in which terms are used. It denotes first the 'what' of a thing, i.e. the individuality; and then the quality or quantity or any other such category (Tredennick, Loeb).

To/ o)/n le/getai pollaxwj, kaqa/per dieilomeqa pro/teron e)n toi=j peri\ posaxw=j semai/nei ga\r to\ me/n ti/ e)sti kai\ to/de ti, to\ de\ poion h)\ poson h)\ tw=n a)/llwn e/(kaston tw=n ou/(tw kathgoroume/no\n.

The two senses of being are not in any obvious way the two, which were left over from the discussion in book IV (essential and actuality/potentiality). It is as if Aristotle here attempts to explain what is central about being. Being is:

1. the 'what' (ti/ e)sti) and the 'this' (to/de ti) and
2. what is said about it according to the predications (κατηγορια).

This distinction is between two senses of being as being, being kaq)a)uto/. It is made in the dictionary, but it is not the first distinction made, nor is it the most important. In the dictionary the contrast between essential and accidental being is first. But as we have discarded accidental being, being kata sumbebhkoj, we are now dealing with what things are in (or of) themselves, and what they are, are *what* they are, which makes them a *this-something*, of such and such a category.

It is evident, says Aristotle, that it is the first of these senses, the 'this-something' which is the primary sense of being, the central one, because 'sitting', 'at nine o'clock', and 'red' are dependant on the being which sits, happens at nine and is red. This is why the being, being qua being, with which first philosophy is concerned, is substance (ou)sia), translated by Hope with 'primary being'. Primary being, or substance, is primary in definition (και λογω), knowledge (και γνωσει) and time (και χρονω). What defines it is a predicate that states its essence, not any of its accidents. It is necessarily known before any of its accidents, as it identifies them as accidents. Hence the question 'what is being (το ον)?' is the question: 'what is substance (ουσια)?' This, in fact, is Aristotle's decisive step away from Plato. He could have said that primary being is essential being, not a 'this'. However, if predicates are to mean something, and not just anything, (cfr. IV/Γ, 4) they must be predicated about something, which is irrespective of what is predicated of it. This is substance. And to be *what* it is, it must be a 'this'.

Aristotle's Theory of Substance

The start of Book VII/Z begins afresh. At the outset of the Substance-books, we are told:

There are several senses in which a thing may be said to be, as we pointed out previously in our book on the various senses of words; for in one sense it means what a thing is or a 'this', and in another sense it means that a thing is of a certain quality or quantity or has some such predicate asserted of it (ROT).

'Being' has many meanings, as we have previously pointed out in our account of the various ways in which things are said. For 'being' means, on the one hand, what a thing is or a 'this something' [or subject]; on the other hand, it means that a thing is such, or so much, or any of the other types of predicates (Hope).

The term 'being' has several senses, which we have classified in our discussion of the number of senses in which terms are used. It denotes first the 'what' of a thing, i.e. the individuality; and then the quality or quantity or any other such category (Tredennick, Loeb).

To/ o)/n le/getai pollaxwj, kaqa/per dieilomeqa pro/teron e)n toi=j peri\ posaxw=j' semai/nei ga'r to\ me/n ti/ e)sti kai\ to/de ti, to\ de\ poion h)\ poson h)\ tw=n a)/llwn e/(kaston tw=n ou/(tw kathgoroume/no\n.

The two senses of being are not in any obvious way the two, which were left over from the discussion in book IV (essential and actuality/potentiality). Aristotle here attempts to explain what is *central* about being. He will later in the substance-books discuss substance as composed of form and matter (book VIII/H) and as actual or potential/necessary or possible (book IX/Q) Being is:

3. the 'what' (ti/ e)sti) and the 'this' (to/de ti) and
4. what is said about it according to the predications (kathgoriai).

This distinction is between two senses of being as being, being kaq)a)uto/. It is made in the dictionary, but it is not the first distinction made, nor is it the most important. In the dictionary the contrast between essential and accidental being is first. But as we have discarded accidental being, being kata\ sumbebhko/j, we are now dealing with what things are in (or of) themselves, and what they are, are *what* they are, which makes them a *this-something*, of such and such a category.

It is evident, says Aristotle, that it is the first of these senses, the 'this-something' which is the primary sense of being, the central one, because 'sitting', 'at nine o'clock', and 'red' are dependant on the being which sits, happens at nine and is red. This is why the being, being qua being, with which first philosophy is concerned, is substance (ou)si/a), translated by Hope with 'primary being'. Primary being, or substance, is primary in definition (kai\ lo/gw), knowledge (kai\ gnw/sei) and time (kai\ xro/n%). What defines it is a predicate that states its essence, not any of its accidents. It is necessarily known before any of its accidents, as it identifies them as accidents. Hence the question 'what is being (to\ o)/n)?' is the question: 'what is substance (ou)si/a)?' This, in fact, is Aristotle's decisive step away from Plato. He could have said that primary being is essential being, not a 'this'. However, if predicates are to mean something, and not just

anything, (cfr. IV/Γ, 4) they must be predicated about something, which is irrespective of what is predicated of it. This is substance. And to be *what* it is, it must be a ‘this’.

The Dictionary on Substance (ου)σι/α V/Δ, 8:

| The term ‘substance’ is used in four ways: | Substance means: |
|---|---|
| 1. About simple bodies (απλα σοματα) such as earth, fire, water, and in general about all bodies, and the bodies composed of them, as well as animals and demons. These are called substances because they are not said about a substrate (καθ’ υποκειμενον), but other things are said of them as a substrate. | 1. The (bodily) subject of predication. |
| 2. About the immanent explanation or cause (αιτιον) of a being, which, not being predicated of the thing, nevertheless explains it. We don’t say, for example, that a living being is soul or life. | 2. The immanent cause of a being |
| 3. About whatever inheres (ενυπαρχειν) in beings in the first sense, delimiting them and giving them shape and form: whatever, if destroyed, destroys the thing as such. Its limits, the lines of the surface, the numbers (dimensions) of the thing. | 3. The dimensions of a being |
| 4. About ‘what it was to be’ (το τι ην ειναι) a given thing, which is determined in its definition (λογος). | 4. The essence of a being |

Hence, Aristotle says ου)σι/α (substance, primary being) has a double sense: It is the ultimate subject matter (υποκειμενον εσχατον), and that which, being definitely a this-something (to/de ti), may have a separate being (χοριστον), like a things form (μορφη) or idea (ειδος). This is the distinction between ‘primary substance’ (the ultimate subject matter) and ‘secondary substance’ (that which may have a ‘separate’ being).

Aristotle's Theory of Substance, continued

VII/Z, 3: Candidates for Substance

Book Z is a proper treatise. Having set out to analyze the various senses of being (Z, 1), it lists the various suggestions for what could count as 'primary being' (ουσια) (Z, 2), suggestions we have already met in the dictionary. Among these, those taught at the Academy by Plato (ideas, numbers and sensible beings) and Speusippus (who is said to have sought to establish principles for various categories of primary being: unity, numbers, magnitudes and soul) are the most important. Aristotle sets out to investigate what primary being really is.

Perhaps we can say that whereas the dictionary gives the usual meaning of the word (listing simple bodies, intrinsic cause, dimensions and essence), thus analyzing it on a linguistic level, Z attempt to explore the logical meaning of the concept. What primarily is, can be seen in four ways, slightly altering the perspective each time. Ross translates *Le/getai d) h(ou)si/a a)ll) e)n te/ttaroi/* ((1028b33) as 'substance can be applied to four main objects'; more literally it would seem to be simply: 'ousia is said in four'. Aristotle is going to discuss to what extent ου)si/a is either of them.

| 'Substance' can be used in at least four ways: (translation by Tredennick) | Substance means: (translation by Hope) | 'Substance' applies to four objects: (translation by Ross) | It is treated in: |
|--|---|---|-------------------|
| About the essence (το τι εν ειναι), which is said to be the substance of the particular (ουσια δοκει ειναι εκαστου). | Being a what (το τι εν ειναι) | The essence | Z, 4 - 6 |
| About the universal (καθολου), which is said to be the substance of the particular. | Being a generality (καθολου) | The universal | Z, 13 - 16 |
| About the genus (γενος), which is said to be the | Being a kind (γενος) | The genus | Z, 7 - 12 |

| | | | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------|------|
| substance of the particular. | | | |
| About the substrate (υποκειμενον). | Being a subject-matter (υποκειμενον) | And the substrate | Z, 3 |

The subject of discourse, or the substrate (υποκειμενον) is that about which everything else is said, and hence it is thought in the truest sense to be what substance is. We must therefore start by investigating it. (Next candidate for substance to be examined will be essence (το τι εν ειναι), then kind (γενοσ) and finally the universal (καθολου)).

But what is substrate? That to which everything else is attributed, that about which everything else is said, is either matter (υλη), form (μορπη) or a composition of the two. If substrate was matter, it could not be substance, because it would not be separable and a 'this' (χοριστον και το δε τι) (1029a27). And substance is thought to be precisely this. Hence the form (ειδοσ) and the combination seems more suitable candidates for being the substrate, if substrate is substance. The combination, however, is posterior to both matter and form, so we are left to investigate form, i.e. the essence or the 'what'. The obvious suggestion, then, that substance is substrate, evaporates, because substrate as such, without it being something in particular, is unidentifiable, and hence cannot be primary being, which is both a this and a what.

Give two good reasons why is this account of the meanings of substance different from that of the dictionary:

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|----|
| 1. |
| 2. |

Is the idea of a tree a substance?

| | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| According to the dictionary account: | According to the Substance-books account: |
|--------------------------------------|---|

Aristotle's Theory of Substance, continued

V/Δ, 2: The Causes of Substance

So far we have found out:

1. That first philosophy (metaphysics) is the science of being *qua* being.
2. That being means accidental being, essential being, being as truth and actuality/potentiality.
3. That first philosophy cannot concern accidental being (because there can be no science of it), or being as truth, because being as being is not being as truth.
4. That first philosophy concerns being according to itself, being κατὰ αὐτὸ, essential being, being according to the categories, and that because substance is that about which everything else is said (or predicated), the question 'what is being?' really is the question: 'what is substance?'.
5. Substance means: the bodily subject of predication, the immanent cause of a being, its dimensions or its essence.
6. It is said (to reside) in the substrate, the universal, the kind or the essence.

We have spoken about the subject of predication, the substrate, the universal, the kind, the dimensions and the essence. We can now ask what it is that substance is the immanent cause of a thing. To do this, let us start by looking up what 'cause' (αἰ/τιον) means in the dictionary, while remembering that metaphysics also was thought to be the science of principles and causes.

| | | | |
|---|--|--|--|
| A cause is said to be (Tredennick): | An explanatory factor means from one point of view (Hope): | We call a cause (Ross): | There are four causes (plus intermediary causes) that can apply to the same thing: |
| That as a result of whose presence something comes into being (e.g. the bronze of a statue). | The material constituent (ἐνυπαρχόντων) from which (ἐκ οὗ) a thing comes to be. | That from which (as immanent material) a thing comes into being. | Material cause. E.g. letters in a syllable, building materials in a building, elements in bodies, parts in wholes, assumptions in conclusions. <i>Id ex quo Intrinsic cause</i> |
| The form or the pattern, i.e. the essential formula and the classes which contain it (e.g. the ratio 2:1 and number in general is the cause of the octave) as well as the parts of the formula. | The form (εἶδος) or pattern (παράδειγμα) of a thing, i.e. its reason (λόγος) (and the kind of reason) which explains what it was to be (τοῦ τῆς εἰσῆς) that thing. This kind of explanatory factor is found in the parts (μέρη) of a definition (λόγος). | The form or pattern, i.e. the formula of the essence, and the classes which include this (e.g. the ratio 2:1 and number in general are causes of the octave) and the parts of the formula. | Formal cause. E.g. what it was to be that particular whole in the syllable, building, body, whole, conclusion. <i>Intrinsic cause</i> |

| | | | |
|--|---|--|---|
| <p>The source or the first beginning of change or rest (e.g. the man who plans is a cause, the parent is the cause of the child, what produces the cause of what is produced, what changes of what is changed).</p> | <p>The agent (a)rxh\ whereby (o(/qen) a change (metabolh=j) or state of rest is first produced; a decision is 'responsible' for a plan, a father 'causes' the child, and in general, any maker 'causes' what he makes, and any agent causes some change.</p> | <p>That from which the change or the freedom from change first begins. E.g. the man who has deliberated is a cause, and the father a cause of the child, and in general the maker a cause of the thing made and the change-producing of the change.</p> | <p>Efficient cause. E.g. a seed, a physician, and advisor: the factor whereby a change or state of being is initiated. <i>Id a quo</i> <i>Extrinsic cause</i></p> |
| <p>The same as 'end', i.e. the final cause (e.g. as the 'end' of walking is health).</p> | <p>The end (te/loj) or the wherefore (to\ ou(= e(/neka).</p> | <p>The end, i.e. that for the sake of which a thing is, e.g. health is the cause of walking.</p> | <p>Final cause. The end or the good of the other causes. <i>Extrinsic cause</i></p> |
| <p>All those means towards the end which arise at the instigation of something else (e.g. as fat-reducing, purging, drugs and instruments are causes of health, for they all have the end as their object, (..)).</p> | <p>Any intermediate means to the end of a series of acts.</p> | <p>All the means that intervene before the end, when something else has put the process in motion (..)</p> | <p>Intermediary causes</p> |
| <p>These are roughly all the meanings of 'cause', but since causes are spoken of with various meanings, it follows that there are several causes (and that not in an accidental sense) of the same thing. E.g. both statuary and bronze are causes of the statue; not in different connections, but qua statue. However, they are not causes in the same way, but the one as material and the other as source of motion.</p> | <p>Since what we call an explanatory factor may be any one of these different aspects of a process, it follows [happens] (sumbai/nei) not only that anything actually has several such factors which are not merely accidental differences of meaning (as both the sculptor's art and the bronze are needed to explain a statue as a statue, the bronze being its material (u(/lh), and the sculpturing its agent (o(/qen h(ki/nhsij)) (..).</p> | <p>These, then, are practically all the senses in which causes are spoken of, and as they are spoken of in several senses it follows that there are several causes of the same thing, and in no accidental sense, e.g. both the art of sculpture and the bronze are causes of the statue, not in virtue of anything else, but <i>qua</i> statue.</p> | <p>Because cause means different things, there are more than one cause of the same thing. Of the word 'category' there are the syllables (material cause), the intelligibility (formal cause), the one who coined the term, and perhaps the speaker (the efficient cause) and the purpose for which it is spoken, communication (the final cause).</p> |

That substance is the immanent cause of a thing means that it is either form or matter, and as form better explains what it is for a being to be what it was (to ti en einai), what explains a being, what causes it to be what it is, is itself. Being, in a sense, is self-explanatory. This is why the science of causes and principles (explanatory factors) can be the same as the science of being as being.

Aristotle's Theory of Substance, Continued

Physics II, 3: The Causes of Substance

Reading this passage, we are struck by its similarity to the passage in the dictionary, we have just read. What in fact is the difference between physics and metaphysics, if both investigate the causes of things?

Now that we have established these distinctions, we must proceed to consider causes, their character and number. Knowledge is the object of our inquiry, and men do not think they know a thing till they have grasped the 'why' of it (which is to grasp its primary cause). So clearly we too must do this as regards both coming to be and passing away and every kind of natural change, in order that, knowing their principles, we may try to refer to these principles each of our problems. (ROT)

In the *Physics* describes the difference in this way:

the student of nature is concerned only with those things whose forms are separable indeed, but do not exist apart from matter.

Whereas:

the mode of existence and essence of the separable it is the business of first philosophy to define (*Phys.* II, 2). (ROT)

In the *Metaphysics* he describes the difference in terms of metaphysics having to *give an account of the essence*, in contrast with the individual sciences which either start from perception or assumes essence as a hypothesis (*Metaph.* VI/Γ, 1). Hence the student of nature must know the essence only "up to a point": he need not be able to define it, as he refers to things under their aspect of coming to be and passing away. Their essence does not pass away or come to be, but *they* do, and *they* are our objects in the *Physics*, in so far as they are separable things existing in matter not independently of it. This means that the essence is what is separable, and hence what metaphysics deals with as distinct from physics. The essence, also, is eternal, i.e. outside time.

In Book G, Aristotle puts it this way:

Tredennick:

Obviously it is the province of a speculative science to discover whether a thing is eternal and immutable and separable (xwristo/n) from matter; not, however, of physics (since physics deals with mutable objects) nor of mathematics, but of a science prior to both. For physics deals with things which exist separately but are not immutable; and some branches of mathematics deal with things which are immutable, but presumably not separable, but present in matter; but the primary science treats of things which are both separable and immutable. Now all causes must be eternal (a)i/+dia), but these

Ross:

But if there is something which is eternal and immovable and separable, clearly the knowledge of it belongs to a theoretical science, - not, however, to natural science (for natural science deals with certain movable things) nor to mathematics, but to a science prior to both. For natural science deals with things which are inseparable from matter but not immovable, and some parts of mathematics deal with things which are both separable and immovable. Now all causes must be eternal, but especially these; for they are the causes of so much of the divine as appears to us. There must, then, be

especially; since they are the causes of what will be visible of things divine (tw=n qei/on). Hence there will be three speculative philosophies (filosofi/ai qeorhtikai/): mathematics, physics and theology (qeologikh/) – since it is obvious that if the divine is present anywhere, it is present in this kind of entity; and also the most honourable (timiwt/thn) science must deal with the most honourable class (ge/noj) of subject.

The speculative sciences, then, are to be preferred to the other sciences, and ‘theology’ to the other speculative sciences. One might indeed raise the question whether the primary philosophy is universal or deals with some one genus or entity; because even the mathematical sciences differ in this respect – geometry and astronomy deal with a particular kind of entity (fusi/n ei)si/n), whereas universal mathematics applies to all kinds alike. Then if there is some other substance (e(tera ou)si/a) besides those which are naturally composed (fu/sei sunesthkui/aj), physics will be the primary science; but if there is a substance which is immutable (a)ki/nhtoj), the science which studies this will be prior to physics and will be primary philosophy, and universal in this sense, that it is primary. And it will be the province of this science to study being *qua* being; what it is and what its attributes are which belong to it *qua* being. (Metaph. IV/G,1).

three theoretical philosophies, mathematics, natural science, and theology, since it is obvious that if the divine is present anywhere, it is present in things of this sort. And the highest science must deal with the highest genus, ...[no change of paragraph]

so that the theoretical sciences are superior to the other sciences, and this to the other theoretical sciences. One might indeed raise the question whether first philosophy is universal, or deals with one genus, i.e. some one kind of being; for not even the mathematical sciences are all alike in this respect, – geometry and astronomy deal with a certain particular kind of thing, while universal mathematics applies alike to all. We answer that if there is no substance other than those which are formed by nature, natural science will be the first science; but if there is an immovable substance, the science of this must be prior and must be first philosophy, and universal in this way, because it is first. And it will belong to this science to consider being *qua* being – both what it is and the attributes which belong to it *qua* being.

This is why the causes are the same in physics as in metaphysics. Metaphysics is prior to physics only in so far as another substance exists, which is immutable. The very fact, however, that the causes are eternal, places the investigation of them outside physics (dealing only with the changes of changeable things). Thus metaphysics is the science of principles and causes, and the first of these which is being as such.

| The various <i>senses</i> of substance | The various <i>candidates</i> of substance | The various <i>causes</i> of substance |
|--|--|--|
| Provides us with linguistic variation, so that we can grasp the meaning of the word. | Provides us with eidetic variation, so that we can grasp the essence of a thing. | Provides us with ontological variation, so that we can know what a thing is. |
| Gives us insight into language | Gives us insight into essence | Gives us insight into the real, whether physical or metaphysical |

Aristotle's Metaphysics: an Overview

We have seen that:

7. That first philosophy (metaphysics) is the science of being *qua* being.

| Tredennick: | Ross: | Hope: |
|---|---|--|
| It is <i>wisdom</i> or <i>knowledge concerning principles and causes</i> (1/A, 982a4) | Since we are seeking this knowledge, we must inquire of what kind are the causes and principles, the knowledge of which I wisdom. | It is <i>wisdom</i> (sofi/a) or <i>rational knowledge</i> (e)pisth/mh) <i>concerning certain basic factors</i> (a)rxaj) and <i>principles</i> (ai)ti/aj). |
| It is <i>one science studying being qua being and the attributes inherent in it qua being</i> (IV/Γ, 1005a14) | Obviously then, it is the work of one science to examine being qua being, and the attributes which belong to it qua being | <i>It is a single science</i> (e)pisth/mhj) that must view systematically (<i>qewrh=sai</i>) being as being and whatever belongs to it (<i>u)pa/rxonta</i>) as being |
| It is <i>first philosophy</i> , one of the three speculative philosophies: <i>theology</i> (as distinct from <i>mathematics</i> and <i>physics</i>). It treats of the <i>separable</i> and <i>immutable</i> , and if there is such a substance, it will study that (VI/E, 1025b1 – 1026a 32) | There must then be three theoretical philosophies, mathematics, natural science, and theology, (..) the first science deals with things which are both separable and immovable. (..) One might indeed raise the question whether first philosophy is universal, or deals with one genus (..). We answer that if there is no substance other than those which are formed by nature, natural science will be the first science. | It is <i>first philosophy</i> (prw/th filosofi/a), one of the <i>three speculative philosophies</i> (filosofi/ai qeoretikai qeologikh/), as distinct from mathematics (maqmatikh/) and physics (fysikh/). It treats of the <i>separable</i> (xwrista/) and <i>immutable</i> (a)ki/nhta), and if there is such a substance (ou)si/a), it will study that. |

8. That being means accidental being, essential being, being as truth and actuality/potentiality.

We have looked Aristotle's understanding of being up in his 'dictionary' (Δ, 7), seeing that he accounts for four different ways that being is said to be, being *κατα συμβεβηκος*, being *καθ'αυτο*, being *αληθεος* and being *δυναμις* or *εντελεχεια*.

9. That first philosophy cannot concern accidental being (because there can be no science of it), or being as truth, because being as being is not being as truth.

10. That first philosophy concerns being according to itself, being *κατ'αυτο*, essential being, being according to the categories, and that because substance is that about which everything else is said (or predicated), the question 'what is being?' really is the question: 'what is substance?'.

11. We then looked up substance in the dictionary, and saw that its linguistic senses were: the bodily subject of predication, the immanent cause of a being, its dimensions or its essence. (Δ, 8).

As candidates for being as being (the ontological sense of being) Aristotle considers only essential being (being καθ'αυτο), which is on the one hand a 'this' (τοδε τι) and a 'what' (τι εστι), and on the other can be said according to the categories (Z, 1). Accidental being cannot be the object of a science, and being as truth is not being as being. So if metaphysics is to be the science of being as being, it must be about essential being whether potential or actual. However, among the categories, substance (τι εστι) is the most καθ'αυτο, or the most essential, as 'sitting', 'at five o'clock', 'above the door', are not independent beings, but are said about something else. They are said about – predicated of – an insect, for example. Because this being is first in definition, knowledge and time, the question 'what is being?' can be reduced to the question: 'what is primary being?'; 'what is substance?'

12. Substance can be said to reside (essentially) in the substrate, the universal, the kind or the essence. (Z, 3).

Substance cannot be the subject-matter because then it would not be separable (χωριστον). Not being identifiable as something, nothing could be predicated of it. Therefore it is more likely to be essence, genus or kind.

13. Substance can be explained in four ways: materially, formally, efficiently and finally (ontologically).

But metaphysics is not only about being as being. It is about its causes and principles; explanations and origins. There are said to be four kinds of explanation: the material, the formal, the efficient and the final. It happens that there are several causes of the same thing; of being as being, as well as things' coming-to-be (Phys. II, 3), there can be four kinds of causes.

What of origins (αρχη) or the principles of being as being? All causes are beginnings in this sense. Of all them, there must be a first (α, 2). For there to be matter, there must be prime matter; for there to be form, there must be a form of forms; for there to be generation, there must be a source; and for there to be finality, there must be an end. Metaphysics treats of the separable (χωριστα) and immutable (ακινητα), and if there is such a substance (ουσια), it will study that (10 26a 30).

So is there such a substantial principle explaining the why of being *qua* being? Aristotle thinks it is the thought that thinks itself (Λ/XII, 7), whereas the unmoved mover explains movement.

What Happened as Metaphysics was Christianized?

Hildegard von Bingen: The First Principle

What is the *In Principio*?

To know its essence, we may investigate its causes (explanatory factors):

Materially: A poem recorded in the *Riesencodex*, copied and assembled at Rupertsberg Benedictine Convent, headed by Hildegard, probably in the last years of her life (1177 – 79). The final hymn of *Ordo Virtutum*, corresponds to the final ‘audision’ of *Scivias* (1151). *Scivias* (‘Know the ways!’ concerns the history of salvation, and is the first volume of Hildegards Trilogy, also comprising *Liber Vitae Meritorum* (concerning subjective salvation) and *Liber Divinorum Operum* (concerning objective or cosmic salvation). As these two last are exegesis of the last ‘audision’ of *Scivias*, *Ordo Virtutum* constitutes the center of Hildegard’s work.

Scivias comprises three books: ‘The Creator and Creation’, ‘The Redeemer and Redemption’ and ‘The History of Salvation Symbolized by a Building’. The thought – though visionary – is therefore systematic or archetectonic (in a way even Aristotle’s had not been). Each chapter of the books is an exegesis of a vision, described at the beginning and accompanied by an illustration carried out by one of her sisters during her lifetime. (The illuminations of the two later works *Liber Vitae Meritorum* and *Liber Divinorum Operum* are finalised after Hildegard’s death, after the written descriptions of the visions.)

The illuminations shown from *Scivias* are the visions entitled:

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| Introduction: | These are true visions flowing from God |
| Book One: | 1. God enthroned shows himself to Hildegard 2. Creation and the Fall 3. The Universe and its symbolism 4. Soul and Body 6. The Choirs of Angles |
| Book Two: | 1. The Redeemer 2. The Trinity 3. The Church, Bride of Christ and Mother of the Faithful 6. Christ’s Sacrifice and the Church 7. The Devil |
| Book Three: | 1. God and Man (The Fallen Stars) 11. The Last days and the Fall of the Antichrist 12. The new Heaven and the New Earth |

Formally: Harmony (music is the sounding of the perfect numbers of the universe and the soul reflecting it. Disorder produces noise, not music), even cosmic harmony.

Efficiently: Written by Hildegard von Bingen no later than 1170, to be performed by her Benedictine sisters for the benefit of their relatives and guests, according to how it was

‘seen’ in a vision (audision). Brought to us by Sequentia, a German ensemble dedicated to the restoration of medieval music.

Finally: An explanation of *Ordo Virtutum*, *Scivias* and *Liber Divinorum Operum* and of ‘what was in the Beginning’, of the First Principle.

Ordo Virtutum concerns the soul who, presenting its candidature to become virtuous, fails because the toil of remaining harmonious in their harmonious company proves too difficult. She falls into the embrace of the devil who shouts ‘*fatue, fatue quid prodest tibi laborare? Respice mundum, et amplectetur te magno honore*’. When the soul, desirous of the company of the virtues, repents, the queen of the virtues, *Humilitas*, reminds her that her identity is that of the beloved, and promises that the virtues will help her. The devil presents another assault when he discovers the virtues in the company of his prey, accusing the virtues of not knowing who they are and what they cultivate (tu nescis quid colis (...) unde nescis quid sis!). The virtues thereafter present who they cultivate (God) and themselves to the soul one by one, encouraging her to enter their society, that she may defend herself against the devil and finally reject him. The last hymn is the final harmony, which sums up ‘what was in the beginning’, and hence what has happened, and how and why.

For Aristotle the first principle is the thought that thinks itself because (XII/Λ, 7):

- Thought is the highest activity, and the good moves without being moved
- Thought is most intelligible and best, when it is identified with its object
- The highest object which the highest activity may have is therefore itself
- We participate in this when we think, and better when we think about the highest object

This Greek insight is assimilated already by John 1,1:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
Εν αρχη ην ο λογος, και ο λογος ην πρ ος τον θεον, και θεος ην ο λογος.
God.

John expresses Aristotle’s insight that everything there is, is intelligible in its definition (lo/goj), which is what a substance (ou)si/a has, integrating its genus and species. Substance is essentially intelligible. And this is God.

Hildegard expresses John’s insight, expressing Aristotle’s, in the commentary on the prologue of St. John (*Liber Operum Divinorum*, visio 1 - 4). *I am* is ‘Beginning of beginnings’, ‘Reason of reasons’, ‘Form of forms’, ‘Harmony of harmonies’, ‘Life of life’. In *I am* Man is with God the principle of the universe.

When Aristotle is rediscovered and translated after 1200 the similarity of its insights and those of Christianity fascinates and frightens. The very difficulty with which Aristotle is assimilated in the Christian West is the reason why it becomes impossible to separate the two later. A welding occur which makes it difficult to reject one without affecting the other. Modern science had a hard time replacing Aristotle’s physics, Luther purged Christianity from philosophy, and ‘anti-metaphysics’ rejects essentialism as a kind of dogmatism, but no stream of thought has yet managed to separate the two out from one another.

II. Christian Metaphysics

Thomas Aquinas: *De ente et essentia*

Aristotle showed that being is primarily substance, and that there are four candidates for substance (matter, υποκειμενον, essence, το τι εν ειναι, universal, καθολου, and genus, γενος), whereof we investigated only two, namely matter and essence. But the universal and the genus were, like matter and essence, said to be the substance of the particular.

This is still the problem of Aquinas: what is being? The First Principle in the Christian culture (through the Moslem and Jewish adaptations) had been re-identified as a God of which a story was told (the Greek gods were known through their mythical accomplishments, but Aristotle's God was not). It was hence part of popular culture and ethics, as well as of social, legal and political organization, illustrated by Hildegard's *In Principio*. In what way was that to affect Aristotle's quest for being and primary being, i.e. for the enterprise of metaphysics?

In one way not so very much, as philosophical terms, problems and solutions remain largely identical throughout different historical circumstances. In another way profoundly, as a new coherence seems to consolidate the Aristotelian ideas into a system, the principle of which is the tri-personal God expressing himself through His Word and Love in Creation as well as Redemption.

The terms, problems and solutions of *de ente et essentia* are largely the same as those of Aristotle. Thomas distinguishes between two senses of being (attributing this distinction to Aristotle's *V/Δ*, 7, where four senses of being, as we have seen, are distinguished, not two): the being (ens) of the categories and that expressed in a true statement. When we discuss essence, we discuss, according to Aristotle, an account that defines the essence without containing it (*VII/Z*, 4). E.g. the human being is a rational animal. Here we combine a genus (animal) with a specific difference (rational) to say that that is what a human being is, i.e. that it is true that a human being is a rational animal. It is therefore not insignificant that Aquinas after Aristotle claims that essence is not derived from the being of truth, but from being in the sense of the categories. He hereby states that essence, before it is expressed in an account, is what it is, and hence only something that is, and not lacks for example, has essence, even if lacks are talked about, and in that sense can be said to be.

This is how Thomas interprets Aristotle's reduction of being to substance and substance to essence. He has swiftly incorporated the neo-platonic semi-dualistic hierarchy of being and non-being, attributing intelligibility only to being, not to non-being. (In Aristotle's

dictionary privation, στερησις, as well as damaged, κολοβον, is defined). The “ladder of being” mounting from material inanimate being, through vegetative, animal and rational composite being (i.e. being composite of matter and form) to pure spiritual being, both composite (in angels) and non-composite (in God), results. This ladder is, because only being has essence, also a ladder of intelligibility. In so far as the unintelligible (matter, the intelligibility of which consists in its non-intelligibility) recedes, being becomes more intelligible. This implies that the being of the non-composite substances is more intelligible in themselves (*in se*, καθ’αυτο, essentially), but not in relation to us (*secundum quid*, κατα συμβεβηκος, accidentally). The composite substances are more intelligible in relation to us.

In composite substances the essence cannot be reduced to either matter or form or to the relation between the two. It is rather what is composed of matter and form. But genus, species and specific difference are related precisely to matter, form and the relation between the two. The genus is not identical with but derived from matter as signifying a whole (e.g. animal). The specific difference (e.g. rational) specifies by the relation between matter (the genus) and form (species), and hence they together constitute the definition of the species (e.g. rational animal). The genus designates the whole of the species, but in an indeterminate manner. This is how it can designate many species, without the many species being one and the same. The species is indeterminate in the same way in relation to essence (by Thomas here identified with nature), but the species has its determinacy in relation to the genus from the form. Likewise with the essence of the individual, which is not identical with that of which it is the essence. It has its determinacy in relation to the species from the form, and its indeterminacy in relation to the individual from matter. Therefore Thomas is said to defend that the principle of individuation is matter.

Plan of *de ente et essentia*:

1. being and essence
2. essence in composite substances
3. essence in relation to the concepts of genus, species and difference
4. essence in non-composite substances
5. God is being, in him being and essence do not differ

There is no genus and species of essences in so far as these are mere parts of the whole, and not the whole e.g. humanity is not an essence of a special kind. But human being is.

Therefore essence can be seen in two ways. Humanity has some elements essential to it. This way of being essence is neither one nor many, because neither is essential to it. Socrates’ essence, however, is not humanity. His essence has two ways of being: in Socrates and in the mind. It is as existing in the mind that it can be said to be a kind, because Socrates himself is not a kind. Humanity therefore is the kind of essence Socrates has, the kind being attributed to Socrates’ essence as it exists in the mind.

Aquinas: de ente et essentia II

On being, essence and truth

Viso quid significetur nomine essentiae in substantiis compositis videndum est quomodo se habeat ad rationem generis, speciei e differentiae.

Quia autem id, cui convenit ratio generis vel speciei vel differentiae, praedicatur de hoc singulari signato, impossibile est quod ratio universalis scilicet generis vel speciei conveniat essentiae secundum quod per modum partis significatur ut nomine humanitatis vel animalitatis. Et ideo dicit Avicenna quod rationalitas non est differentia, sed differentiae principium; et eadem ratione humanitas non est species nec animalitas genus.

So now that we have seen what the word *essence* means in composite substances, we must see how it is related to the notions of genus, species, and the differentiating characteristic.

Now notions like genus, species, and differentiating characteristic attach to something that can be attributed to this demarcated singular. So general notions like genus or species can't attach to essence as a component part (expressed by words like *humanness* or *animalness*). This is the reason Ibn Sina says logicalness is not a differentiating characteristic but a source of differentiation, and for the same reason humanness is not a species and animalness not a genus. (De ente et essentia III)

Essence can be seen in two ways. According to its concept (secundem rationem propriam) and according to its being in this or that thing (secundum esse quod habet in hoc vel in illo). Essence when seen in the first way is neither one nor many, because neither one nor many is essential to it. Rationality, for example, is essential to humanity, but one or many is not, if it were humanity could not be both in an individual and in many individuals. Essence seen in the second way has two ways of being: in the thing and in the mind. Kind is attributed to it as existing in the mind, as the individual thing cannot be said to be a kind (only to be *of* a kind). Humanity therefore is the kind of essence Socrates has, the kind being attributed to Socrates' essence as it exists in the mind.

Human nature (or essence) seen in the first way, i.e. according to its concept, is not essentially a kind, because all implied in human nature is attributed to Socrates, and Socrates is not a kind. A human being, is, in contrast, according to its concept or definition, an animal (not 'a kind'). In fact there is nothing that is essentially a kind. A kind (and the other logical notions, *genus* and *differentia*) only are accidents of the nature as existing in the mind.

These two ways of seeing essence could be seen to correspond to the two aspects of the intellect: *ratio* and *intellectus*. The formal object of the intellect (intellectus) including both is truth. *Ratio* is the discursive capacity of the intellect, which argues, deliberates and concludes, whereas *Intellectus* is the intuitive capacity, which comprehends first

principles and things. *Ratio* forms the concept in an account or definition, and names its product or activity after it (*ratio*) (translated with concept), whereas *Intellectus* intuits that of which an account is made, whether in the mind or in the thing, and names its intuitions after it (*intellectus*) (also translated with concept). To establish whether an account is correct or a definition adequate, a comparison must occur between the concept formed and the intuition available. This comparison is part of the rational activity we call thinking. When the comparison is complete a state of intuition result, a state we call knowing. Science reposes on both of these activities, but consists properly in the latter.

The essence, therefore, is, as apprehended rationally, neither one nor many, neither existent nor nonexistent. (Husserl will say it is ideal). It is described in a formula or definition. When apprehended intellectually, however, it is existing in the mind or in the thing, being only ideally or formally one, capable of existing in both.

The essence therefore has a two-fold mode of being: an ideal one and a real one.

Is that true also about separated substances (*substantiis separatis, scilicet in anima, intelligentiis et causa prima*)? Their form does not necessarily differ from their essence, as it does in composite substances. Hence their essence does not have this two-fold mode of being. Their essence has only one mode of being: it is simple. As species and essence coincide in them, there can be only one of a kind, as they have no matter to individuate them. Thus there are only one angel in a species. But their essence does not necessarily imply their existence, only in the case of the First Cause.

This implies that there is no intuition of them different from their definition. This, however, does not mean that they exist necessarily, only that if they have existence, it cannot be known from a comparison of intuition with the concept. They are, however, because they are not necessarily existing, composed of being and essence, and the degrees of actuality is what ensures that there can be a multitude of them. Their organization is in this understanding strictly hierarchical.

But in God essence and existence does not differ. He is Pure Act. As there in his case also is no intuition of him different from his definition (His essence is his existence) human knowledge of him, in the sense of intuitions established on the basis of reasoning, is deficient. Not, however, because of His nature, which is super-intelligible, perfectly known by himself, Truth itself, but because of the deficiency of our intellects.

The quest for being, metaphysics, therefore, inherited from Aristotle, concerns being and essence in composite substances, in separate substances and in God, whose being and essence is not separable. The concern with being hence translated into concern with the analogy of beings, *analogia entis*, and with Being.

The systematic 'thinking out' the relationship between mind and being, between being as truth and being as being, has begun with the help of the Christian Revelation.

Thomas Aquinas: *De Veritate*

If essence is what the particular is and can be accounted for in a definition, and if, moreover, genus, species and difference by which definitions are given are added to essence is so far as it exists in the mind; stating the essence of something essentially involves correspondence with mind. In fact being as truth, in so far as it is correspondence between mind and thing, cannot be separated out from being as being, because being is intelligible. Even so Thomas carefully distinguishes being as truth from essential being at the beginning of *De ente et essentia*, because they are not the same thing. He also does this in *De Veritate question 1, article 1*. In the objections preceding the response arguments are presented for truth being the same as being. (1) The true is what is, says Augustine. However, to this it could be said that whereas they might be identical in meaning (*secundum ratione*), they do differ in their reference (*secundum supposita*). (2) What is and what is true therefore seems to mean the same. (6) Moreover, the true does not differ from what is either substantially (as what is, is true), nor accidentally (then there would be a genus common to being and truth which there is not). (7) Being true, in fact, does not add a determinant to being (i.e. truth has no specific difference in relation to being, it is not a kind of being), and it is broader, not narrower, as it is true, that what is not is not. Being broader means that it in no way is determined by a specific difference.

However, even if the true is what is, if truth and being does not differ either substantially or accidentally, and if truth does not add to being, being is not just the same as being. When we define and prove, namely, we must rely on self-evident starting points (*principia per se intellectui nota*), if not the enterprise of defining and proving would regress infinitely, and there would be no science of anything. The most self-evident starting point is, according to Avicenna, being, in which all concepts resolve (*illud autem quod primo intellectus concipit quasi notissimum et in quod conceptiones omnis resolvit est ens*). This is how every other mental conception adds something to what is, even if not from the outside (as what would be added would be).

Thus something can add to being only when it expresses something in being which is not expressed in the word 'being'. This can happen in two ways. (1) When what is expressed expresses something special of being, as each level of being and each category expresses a special way of being. Substance expresses something special of being without adding to being. (2) When what is expressed expresses something general of being it can happen in two ways: (a) It can express something general of being *in se* (either affirmatively as when we speak about *a thing (res)*, or negatively when we speak about something *undivided* or *one*). It can also express something general of being *in ordine aliud* (i.e. in relation to something else). This it can in two ways, as (a) divided from (then we speak of *some thing/aliquid*) or as (b) corresponding to whatever it can correspond to, in particular

the human soul, which Aristotle says is ‘quodammoda omnia’. When it corresponds to the intellect it is truth, when it corresponds to the appetite it is good.

What truth hence adds without adding it from outside being is therefore correspondence between mind and being (*conformitas sive aequatio rei et intellectus*).

Therefore truth can be defined in three ways: (1) As that which precedes truth, i.e. what is; (2) as that in which truth consists, i.e. correspondence between mind and thing and (3) as that which truth effects, i.e. what it reveals or manifests of what is.

Secundum hoc ergo veritas sive verum tripliciter invenitur diffiniri.

1. Uno modo secundum illud quod praecedit rationem veritatis et in quo verum fundatur, et sic Augustinus diffinit in libro Soliloquorum ‘verum est id quod est’, et Avicenna in sua metaphysica ‘veritas cuiusque rei et proprietates sui est quod stabilitum est ei’, et quidam sic ‘Verum est indivisio esse et quod est’.
2. Alio modo diffinitur secundum id in quo formaliter ratio veri perficitur, et sic dicit Ysaac quod ‘Veritas est adaequatio rei et intellectus’ et Anselmus in libro De veritate ‘Veritas est rectitudo enim ista secundum adaequationem quandam dicitur -; et Philosophus dicit IV Metaphysicae quod diffinientes verum dicimus ‘cum dicitur esse quod est aut non esse quod non est’.
3. Tertio modo diffinitur verum secundum effectum consequentem, et sic Hilarius quod ‘Verum est declarativum et manifestativum esse’, et Augustinus in libro De vera religione ‘veritas est qua ostenditur id quod est’, et in eodem libro ‘Veritas est secundum quam de inferioribus iudicamus’.

This allows us to define truth or being true in three ways.

1. Firstly, by referring to that which precedes the notion of truth but provides being true with its basis: and this is the way Augustine defined the true as what is; Ibn Sina, the truth of a thing as the possession of the existence established for it; and someone else, being true as the undividedness of existence and what is.
2. In a second way we define it by referring to that in which the notion of the true is formally achieved: and in this way truth was defined by Isaac as the matching of thing and understanding; and by Anselm as rightness that only the mind perceives – rightness here expressing a sort of matching; and Aristotle said that we define the true by saying what it is and what it is not.
3. In yet a third way we define being true by referring to the effect that follows on from it: and in this way Hilary defined the true as revealing and making clear what exists; and Augustine, truth first as that which shows what exists and again as that which we judge lesser things by.

To the objections hence it can be said: (ad 1) Augustine defines truth exclusively as in (1), (ad 6) truth and being does not differ, but corresponds, and (ad 7) truth and being have the same extension, as what is true also in a certain sense exists. So truth is not broader than being. This last response reveals that the distinction between being as truth and being of the categories made at the outset of *De ente et essentia* is merely methodical. Here Thomas argues that because being as true is said about lacks, it must be distinguished from being of the categories.

Truth, in fact, (*De Ver.* 1, 3) is found (1) first in understanding making connections and distinctions, then (2) in definitions based on this connecting and distinguishing (rational) activity. Thirdly (3) truth applies to things as matching God’s understanding and finally (4) to non-deceptive humans or words.

Is this metaphysics of knowledge and truth a useful epistemology? Does it give any criteria for what is true?

What happened as metaphysics was modernized?

Three main factors contribute to the making of modernity:

(1) *The transition from a land-based to a money-based economy* (1350 – 1550). Trade gives rise to a need for capital and the taking of interest seems to be the economic device that ensures a steady flow of capital for the use in trading. The Church did not at first distinguish interest from usury, and therefore was seen as obstructing the development of society. As it itself financed large scale buildings (e.g. St. Peter in Rome) from the giving of indulgences and as whole orders lived from the benefices received from confession, a suspicion of abuse of power arose and fermented. This suspicion grew strong in particular among the merchant class who depends, for survival and for profit, on the taking of interests. The landed Aristocracy and the Crown also resented the Church because of its large lands.

(2) *The Reformation* (1529 – 1550). Probably provoked by the resentment growing from the perceived abuse of power, and the consequent doubt about the divinity of the Institutional Church, Luther (1483 – 1546), Melancton (1497 – 1560), Calvin (1509 – 1569) and Zwingli (1484 – 1531) launched a program for church reform. It abolished ‘popery’, ‘hocus pocus’, a central teaching authority, an idea of a single Christian doctrine, celibacy, monasticism and ‘pagan’ philosophical influence, in particular Aristotle’s. Its slogan *sola fide, sola scriptura* was intended to make people return to the sources of early Christianity, before tradition went wrong and theology went pompous. In Denmark the Reformation was introduced swiftly in one stroke in 1536, settling the power struggle between king and nobility. The confiscation of the lands by the Crown assured stability. In England it was introduced with scandal by Henry VIII.

(3) *The birth of modern science* (1500 – 1750). Copernicus (1473 – 1543) revised the astronomical system of Ptolemaius (ca. 90 – 160), which was centred on the earth, by introducing helio-centrism. Tycho Brahe (1546 – 1601), an observing astronomer, laid the ground for Kepler (1571 – 1630), who analyzed the movements of the planets around the sun. Together with Galileo’s (1564 – 1642) elaboration of laws of movement and inertia, Kepler’s laws were of importance to Newton (1643 – 1727).

Two other features were significant in characterizing the birth of modernity, one as a symptom and another as an additional cause of its unsettled times. The first is the *witch hunting* (1450 – 1700), triggered by the publication of *The Witch Hammer (Maleus Malificarum)* in 1489. The other is the ‘*discovery*’ of *America* (1492) and the consequent systematization of enslavement, first of Red Indians, then of Black Africans, purposely transported to the Americas.

Descartes (1596 – 1650) thus lived in disturbingly hard times. The Reformation had, through *La Fleche* where he was educated, left its finest ideals imprinted on him. But he

was a Catholic, and a soldier in times where the main reason for going to war was religion (*Thirty Years War*). He saw the need to retire to philosophize and establish a *philosophia naturalis*, which could replace Aristotle's.

Meditations on First Philosophy (Meditationes de Prima Philosophia) (1641) expands Chapter IV of his previous *On Method (Discours sur la Methode)* (1637). Descartes' intention is to found philosophy on indubitable principles in contradistinction from mere beliefs. (Such foundation is necessary not only for theoretical reasons but also, and more obviously in Descartes' time, for practical reasons. The Scholastic synthesis had practically allowed for the authority of the Church to weigh heavily in matters of too many kinds. The Reformers had challenged this authority, opening the way towards secular authority. Descartes' argument runs as follows:

- (1) we must start from a self-evident or indubitable first principle.
- (2) To find it, methodical doubt must be exercised. This means that one should only accept as true, what is *clearly and distinctly* seen to be so.
- (3) I can doubt the existence of physical things, that the past existed, and that I have a body. These are all beliefs, accepted from sense, memory, and the capacity to distinguish dream from reality.
- (4) I can also doubt that what reason tells me is true, as certainty could be given to me by an evil god.
- (5) All that resists this methodical Scepticism is that I exist (because I doubt), and that all that appears to me, appears to me in the way it does.
- (6) My idea of God is that he is perfect. Such an idea cannot be due to someone imperfect (as I am). Hence God must exist independently (and be good). This is why I can trust reason.

In a way Descartes is stating anew what Aquinas did in *De Veritate* 1,1:

Dicendum quod sicut in demonstrabilibus oportet fieri reductionem in aliqua principia per se intellectui nota ita investigando quid est unumquodque, alias utrobique in infinitum iretur, et sic periret omnino scientia et cognitio rerum; **illud autem quod primo intellectus concipit quasi notissimum et in quod conceptiones omnis resolvit est ens**, ut Avicenna dicit in principio suae *Metaphysicae*; unde oportet quod omnes aliae conceptiones intellectus accipiantur ex additione ad ens.

In defining what things are, just as in proving things, we must be led back eventually to intellectually self-evident starting points; otherwise both processes would go on for ever, spelling death to all science and all knowledge. Now Ibn Sina says **our first mental conception – the most known as it were to which our analysis of all our conceptions leads us – is what exists**. Consequently, every other mental conception adds something to what exists.

Except that the idea of being as the starting point without which thinking and science is impossible is lost, and replaced by the idea of *my* being. God, also, has come to play the role of guarantor of this being, revealing religion's deep impact on the conditions for thinking in the post-reformation period. Being needed and could have no guarantee for Aquinas, as it was the first, uttermost and fundamental, which guaranteed everything else.

In so far as Descartes states the 'same' as Aquinas, he does so without knowledge of it. Modernity inaugurates with a systematic loss of memory: The old scholastics are no longer read – they are read in commentaries, in seminaries (having been drawn into the process of political division following the Reformation), in Hooker, Leibniz and Baumgarten and Wollf. The climate also has totally changed: reason has been fundamentally disturbed, and is fearful of losing itself.

Descartes: *Meditations on First Philosophy* The Cartesian Starting Point

First Meditation: “About the things we may doubt”

The *Meditations* are called ‘meditations’ because they are a thought experiment. They accept no external evidence, only the internal evidence of certitude. They are a variation of experience (considered as my experience) the purpose of which is to establish the nature of, or criterion for, certitude or evidence. Their result is ‘the Cartesian starting-point’ – the indubitable I-sphere.

Freedom allows Descartes time to think. His most important desire is to make himself free of false opinions and unwanted prejudices. Because without undertaking this process of affirming the foundations, he is unable to “establish something firm and constant in the sciences”. Descartes had been planning to do this for a long time, but as he considered it of much importance, he waited to undertake it until his age was that of a mature man. He explains:

I could not hope, at a later stage in life, to be more fit to execute my plan; and henceforth consider that I was committing a fault if I were still to use in deliberation the time which remains to me for action.

Descartes was undertaking the plan of a lifetime, when he sat down at the fire. Probably with ‘fear and trembling’ as one does in those cases. Free and alone, he applies himself to the destruction of former opinions in their foundations.

Everything I have accepted up to now as being absolutely true and assured, I have learned from or through the senses. But I have sometimes found that these senses played me false, and it is prudent never to trust entirely those who have once deceived us.

The foundations of all his previous opinions are destroyed by this destruction of faith in the testimony of the senses. But there are however something it is unreasonable to doubt. That I am here, have hands etc. If I doubt these, it seems as if I am mad. Yet the experience of dreaming makes me aware that there are times when I am utterly convinced about something, which, however, when I wake up, is realized as merely a dream.

There is no conclusive signs by means of which one can distinguish clearly between being awake and being asleep.

And by the same reasoning, although these general things, viz. eyes, head, hands and the like, may be imaginary, we have to admit that there are even simpler and more universal things which are true and exist, from the mixture of which, no more and no less than from the mixture of certain real colors, all the images of things, whether true and real or fictitious and fantastic, which dwell in our thoughts, are formed. Corporeal nature in general and its extension, are of this class of things, their quantity and size, and their number, as also is the place where they are, the time during which they exist, and such like.

Arithmetic, geometry and the other sciences of this nature, which deal only with very simple and general things, without bothering about their existence or non-existence, contain something certain and indubitable.

Yet it is possible that God would deceive me every time I thought a mathematical proposition to be evidently true. Even if you don't believe in God, but attribute our being to another cause, the lesser perfection of this cause makes it even more likely that I would be deceived all the time. Hence even mathematical reasoning is insecure. Descartes is then, for the sake of formalizing this argument from possible absolute deception, postulating an evil demon.

Second Meditation:

“Of the nature of the human mind and that it is easier to know than the human body”

Even, however, if I doubt my senses and my judgement, I cannot doubt that

by the fact that I was persuaded, or indeed by the mere fact that I thought at all,

I exist.

But there is some deceiver both powerful and very cunning, who constantly uses all his wiles to deceive me. There is therefore no doubt that I exist, if he deceives me; and let him deceive me as much as he likes, he can never cause me to be nothing, so long as I think I am something. So that, after having thought carefully about it, and having scrupulously examined everything, one must then, in conclusion, take as assured that the proposition: I am, I exist, is necessarily true, every time I express it or conceive of it in my mind.

It is of course true, that when I conceive of someone deceiving me, I am not totally confused, but am instead convinced of *someone* deceiving *me*. So in a sense it is Descartes' evil demon argument that allows him certainty of the I. It is because (and in so far as) he **constitutes** the I as deceived by someone, that he has already constituted the I as someone like the deceiver who can be deceived. He is not aware of this presupposition, being so caught up with the horror of being ontologically deceived. Even so, he makes use of the starting point it affords him. There can be no doubt that I exist if he deceives me. There can be no doubt that I am bodily if he also tortures me. There can be no doubt that I have goals if he disappoints me, no doubt I have desires if he frustrates me, no doubt I think if he attempts to prevent me from doing so. The logic of (being in) opposition affords the clearest identity possible to the opposed, without the being aware how much meaning he 'takes' from this opposition.

The Cartesian starting-point is therefore curiously humanist and individualist. It is the modern certainty of the subject that post-modernity will react to, i.e. to Descartes' unwarranted inclusion of the 'I' in the first principle from which all certainty derive. It often, however, understands its criticism to extend beyond modernity to metaphysics generally.

Husserl on Phenomenology

Introduction to the English translation of *Ideas*

- What is phenomenology?
- Is phenomenology descriptive psychology?
- Is phenomenology metaphysics?

What is phenomenology?

Historically it originated as a movement in Germany (Göttingen, with Husserl; Munich with Theodor Lipps), in proximity to the budding science of psychology. Husserl is above everyone associated with its cause – justifiably so, as he dedicated himself to begin it. His pupils in particular, and those who since associated themselves with them were proud of being given the name ‘phenomenologists’. They comprise Scheler, Reinach, Conrad-Martius, Lipps, Stein, Koyré, Hering, Von Hildebrandt, Pfänder, and others (Cfr. Spiegelberg and Sawicki). Those, more famous, perhaps, who have become associated with phenomenology are: Heidegger, Gadamer, Arendt, Ricoeur, Sartre, Levinas, Merleau Ponty and Derrida (cfr. Moran). The first are often referred to as ‘the early phenomenologists’ or ‘Göttingen-phenomenologists’. The second make up the ‘canon’ of ‘continental philosophy’.

Systematically it is programmatically exposed in Husserl’s *Ideas* (1913), in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* article on phenomenology (in the fourteenth edition), in the *Logos* article (1910 or 11) and in the English foreword to *Ideas* (1931). It was, however, already present as a project for a laying a unified foundation of science in *Logical Investigations* (1900 – 01), and this work was the work that drew the early phenomenologists to Göttingen to study under Husserl before the first world war.

Phenomenology is an investigation of phenomena as they appear, and hence an investigation of experience as such. It starts from pure logic (*Logical Investigations*), essence (Ideen) or the transcendental ego (English Foreword to *Ideas*). In the *Cartesian Meditations* (1929) this starting-point is interpreted as being that of Descartes, and hence finally establish philosophy beyond dogma (or doxa). It concerns itself with the essences of conscious life – i.e. what is necessarily so – while “bracketing” existence. It analyses phenomena in their essential structures with their *noetic* and *noematic* components, and takes this to lie within the sphere of the indubitable, which according to Descartes can be seen clearly and distinctly.

Is phenomenology descriptive psychology?

Descriptive psychology takes ideas to be realities of the soul (the psyche), that can be described as such. It is therefore an empirical science, even if it relies on ‘introspection’

or ‘inner perception’. It describes what is there ‘in’ the soul. Descriptive psychologists sometimes did designate themselves as phenomenologists: they described the phenomena of the soul.

Husserl insists that phenomenology is *not* a descriptive psychology. It does not describe the soul, or states of the soul, which both are realities constituted within pure experience. It investigates in stead *pure experience* as emanating from the transcendental ego, i.e. the ideal essential unity of pure experience as such. The way of achieving the required purification is to suspend ‘the natural standpoint’ by the ‘reduction’ and bracket the existence of the objects experienced by the ‘ēpoche’. In this way what is achieved is pure appearance as it appear – and this is what phenomenology is concerned about, not realities of the soul.

Phenomenology in contrast with descriptive psychology is neither ‘psychologistic’, nor ‘naturalistic’, its starting point in the transcendental ego overcomes both.

Is phenomenology metaphysics?

Whereas all transcendences are suspended in the phenomenological starting-point (that of God, that of the World and even that of the Eidetic Realm) the entire eidetic realm cannot be suspended. Of its essential connections we have in fact apodictic evidence; it is accessible to pure intuition. Eidetics – investigating essences or eidē – is part of phenomenology, because it informs thinking, to the point where without it, there could be no experience and no science of experience.

When Husserl understands phenomenology to be partly eidetic, he implies that essences can be separated – in the eidetic reduction – from being or existence. He retains ‘first philosophy’ as a designation for phenomenology and hence understand it to concern essence, but not existence.

Aristotle understands essences (το τι εν ειναι) to be what being primarily is. Metaphysics, or first philosophy, therefore primarily concern essences. Aristotle’s ειδος was not directly a candidate for substance, but γενοσ were. Thomas translated eidos with ‘species’, and used both terms (genus and species) in *De Ente et Essentia* to designate that which was added to essence as it exists in the mind, through which definitions were expressed. Ειδος was the Platonic word for what is over and above the appearances, and it is of course the word we find in ‘eidetic’. Husserl is therefore best understood as a platonic essentialist. For historical reasons he is not keen on the designation ‘metaphysics’.

Supplementary literature:

Spiegelberg: *The Phenomenological Movement*, Martinus Nijhoff, 1976
Sokolowski: *Introduction to Phenomenology*, CUP, 2000

Husserl on Phenomenology as the Foundation of Science The Problem of Intersubjectivity

- Phenomenology as foundation for science
- The problem of intersubjectivity
- The problem of empathy

Phenomenology as a foundation for science

In this book, then, we treat of an *a priori* science ('eidetic', directed upon the universal in its original intuitability), which appropriates, though as pure possibility only, the empirical field of fact of transcendental subjectivity with its factual experiences, equating these with pure intuitable possibilities that can be modified at will, and sets out as its *a priori* the indissoluble essential structures of transcendental subjectivity, which persist in and through all imaginable modifications. "Introduction to the English edition of *Ideas*", p. 11-12

Through the phenomenological and the eidetic reduction the field of this new science of transcendental subjectivity is discovered, in which all sciences, founded in their regional ontologies, find their place. Husserl's idea of a region is that it is the sphere of objects comprised under the highest genus of a kind. These can be of two kinds: formal or material. The science of the formal region is logic (mathematics is part of this region), the sciences of the material regions are the various sciences. Hence the highest genus of material things gives rise to the regional ontology of material nature in which natural science is founded. *Ideas II* constitutes the various highest genera: material nature, animal nature (where under you find the body and psychic reality) and spiritual world. *Ideas III* was thought to attempt to found the various sciences in detail.

The problem of intersubjectivity

"I, the transcendental, absolute I, as I am in my own life of transcendental consciousness; but besides myself, the fellow subjects who in this life of mine reveal themselves as co-transcendental, within the transcendental society of 'Ourselves', which simultaneously reveals itself." It is thus within the intersubjectivity, which in the phenomenological reduction has reached empirical givenness on a transcendental level, and is thus itself transcendental, that the real world is constituted as 'objective', as being there for everyone. "Introduction to the English edition of *Ideas*" p. 21 – 22.

How can intersubjectivity reach empirical givenness on the transcendental level? Is whatever is given within the transcendental realm not precisely bracketing empirical existence? How do I on the other hand know of another subjectivity besides my own, co-constituting the world with me, if it is not empirically? How can I within the absoluteness

of my own experience discover or have the experience of another experience which is just as absolute without my experience becoming relative precisely by this discovery?

Intersubjectivity can only reach 'empirical givenness' on the 'transcendental level' if experience is not strictly either empirical or transcendental, and hence that the phenomenological reduction does not reduce (all) experience to transcendental experience. The way in which I know of other subjects, the way in which they are brought to my attention is in the act of empathy, which therefore is the act in which others are brought to empirical givenness on the transcendental level.

If we take perchance the formation of the plain perceptual constituting of the Thing, whereof the correlate is the sensory thing set out with sensory qualities, we relate ourselves to a single stream of consciousness, to the possible perceptions of a single perceiving personal subject. We find here various strata of unification, the schemata of sensation, the 'visual things' of higher and lower order, which must be completely set out within this order and studied with reference to their noetic-noematic constitution, singly and in their interconnections. The uppermost stratum of this formation is that of the substantial-causal thing, a reality already in the specific sense of the term, but remaining always constitutively bound to one empirical subject and its ideal perceptual manifolds.

The formation next above this is then the intersubjective identical thing, a constitutive unity of a higher order. Its constitution is related to an indefinite plurality of subjects that stand in a relation of 'mutual understanding'. The intersubjective world is the correlate of the intersubjective experience, mediated, that is, through 'empathy'. We are therefore referred to the various unities of sensory things already constituted individually by the many subjects, and thus in further sequence to the corresponding perceptual manifolds belonging to the different personal subjects and streams of consciousness; but before all the new factor of empathy and to the question how it plays a constitutive part in 'objective' experience and gives unity to separated manifolds. *Ideas* § 151.

The problem of empathy

Stein's motives for writing her dissertation on empathy were to elaborate this relationship between subjectivity and intersubjectivity by analysing the problem of empathy.

Now the question needed to be settled: what did I want to work on? I had no difficulty on this. In his course on nature and spirit, Husserl had said that an objective outer world could only be experienced intersubjectively, i.e. through a plurality of perceiving individuals who relate in mutual exchange of information. Accordingly, an experience of other individuals is a prerequisite. To the experience (.), Husserl gave the name *Einfühlung*. What it consists of, however, he nowhere detailed. Here was a lacuna to be filled; therefore, I wished to examine what empathy might be. The Master found this suggestion not bad at all. E. Stein: *Life in a Jewish Family*, p. 269

Her point of view elaborated from this dissertation became a challenge to Husserl's idealism. Perhaps he refers to these challenges, when he says that challenges to his transcendental idealism (p.18) seriously impeded the reception of *Ideas II*, which Stein edited during her time as his assistant 1916-17. She, in fact, thought there was no point trying to found the sciences without an adequate understanding of the role empathy played in constituting the objects of these sciences. Husserl, however, has nothing to retract (p. 19): he maintains that the other can be known as a transcendental fact.

Husserl Transcendental subjectivity and the ego

- Transcendental subjectivity
- Who am I?
- Being

Transcendental subjectivity

Under the title “a pure or transcendental phenomenology” the work here presented seeks to found a new science – though, indeed, the whole course of philosophical development since Descartes has been preparing the way for it – a science covering a new field of experience, exclusively its own, that of “Transcendental subjectivity”. Thus transcendental subjectivity does not signify the outcome of any speculative synthesis, but with its transcendental capacities, doings, is an absolutely independent realm of direct experience, although for reasons of an essential kind, it has so far remained inaccessible. Transcendental experience in its theoretical and, at first, descriptive, bearing, becomes available only through a radical alteration of that same dispensation under which an experience of the natural world runs its course, a readjustment of viewpoint which, as the method of approach to the sphere of transcendental phenomenology, is called “phenomenological reduction”. Introduction to the English edition of *Ideas*, p. 11.

Phenomenology is the seeking for the foundations of a new science, prepared for since Descartes but left undiscovered because the alteration of viewpoint required had not been fully unfolded. Husserl’s constant beginnings seek to redo the unfolding of this viewpoint by reiterating how the alteration takes place. This alteration, or readjustment, of the natural viewpoint is not the outcome, Husserl thinks, of any speculative synthesis. But it is achieved by what he call “the phenomenological or the transcendental reduction”.

Throughout *Ideas*, Husserl seeks to restate this reduction. It being “the method of approach to the sphere of transcendental phenomenology” it is also the method through which transcendental subjectivity or transcendental experience becomes available.

Exercising the *εποχη* we ‘put out of work’ the claim the natural world has on us. We are capable of that in freedom: Husserl uses a Nietzschean phrase: we are capable of ‘Umwertung’ of the natural world, and as we bracket its existence we still keep the experience of it as something belonging to transcendental subjectivity.

When I have performed the *εποχη* and the phenomenological reduction, transcendental subjectivity is seen in its absolute, independent being; the transcendent (natural) world as dependent in its being on the first. The theory of primary being, hence is the theory of transcendental subjectivity.

Who am I?

If we now perform this transcendental phenomenological reduction, this transformation of the natural and psychologically inward standpoint whereby it is transcendentalized, the psychological subjectivity loses just that which makes it something real in the world that lies before us; it loses the meaning of the soul as belonging to a body that exists in an objective, spatio-temporal nature. This transformation of meaning concerns myself, above all the “I” of the psychological and subsequently transcendental inquirer for the time being. Posited as real, I am now no longer a human ego *in* the universal, existentially posited world, but exclusively a subject *for* which this world has being and purely, indeed, *as* that which appears to me, is presented to me, and of which I am conscious in some way or other, so that the real being of the world thereby remains unconsidered, unquestioned, and its validity left out of account. Now if transcendental description passes no judgement whatsoever upon the world, and upon my human ego as belonging to the world, and if, in this description, the transcendental ego is absolutely in and for itself prior to all cosmic being (which first wins in and through it existential validity), it is still at the same time evident that, at every conversion of meaning which concerns the phenomenological-psychological content of the soul as a whole, this very content by simply putting on another existential meaning becomes transcendental-phenomenological, just as the latter, on reverting to the natural phenomenological standpoint, becomes once again psychological.

The reduction suspends the natural ego – i.e. anything of me that belongs to the natural world is left unconsidered. If the transcendental I is absolutely in and for itself – prior to all cosmic or natural being – all its contents, when they put on another existential meaning, becomes transcendental phenomenological. They revert again to the psychological when we go back to the natural standpoint.

Being

The crux of the matter is whether the transcendental I really *is* absolutely in and for itself prior to all cosmic being. How can it be, if we have bracketed all existence?

Its being must be other than cosmic or natural. Husserl makes use of the word being in two ways, to designate the absolute being of the transcendental sphere and to refer to the dependent natural sphere. He does not explain what these two uses of the word being have in common: he has no ‘dictionary entry’ on the term being. It makes the reduction seem a reduction from one form of being to another, of natural being to transcendental being, justifiable perhaps as a parallel to Aristotle’s reduction of being to substance? In fact Husserl does not pretend his enquiry to concern being *qua* being, but in contrast transcendental subjectivity. Therefore we are left with the question: is the study of being *qua* being part of the study of transcendental subjectivity or is transcendental subjectivity part of the study of being *qua* being?

As what the two types of inquiry has in common is their concern with essence, it is not surprising that it is the question of the essence of being (or the meaning of being) which is going to occupy both Heidegger and Stein as two inheritors of the Husserlian heritage.

Edith Stein: From phenomenology to metaphysics

- *On the Problem of Empathy*
- *Beiträge and On the State*
- After 1925

On the Problem of Empathy

All controversy over empathy is based on the implied assumption that foreign subjects and their experience are given to us. Thinkers deal with the circumstances of the occurrence, the effects, and the legitimacy of this givenness. But the most immediate undertaking is to consider the phenomenon of givenness in and by itself and to investigate its essence. We shall do this in the setting of the “phenomenological reduction”.

The goal of phenomenology is to clarify and thereby to find the ultimate basis of all knowledge. To reach this goal it considers nothing that is in any way “doubtful”, nothing that can be eliminated. In the first place, it does not use any results of science whatsoever. This is self-evident, for a science which proposes ultimately to clarify all scientific knowledge must not, in turn, be based on a science already existent, but must be grounded in itself. *On the Problem of Empathy* p. 3.

Empathy, the act in which foreign experience is given to consciousness, and which hence is the act through which the ego is enabled to accede to intersubjectivity as a higher level of objectivity, is investigated by Stein within the phenomenological reduction. I.e. it is described and analysed *as experience*. This she sees as the goal of phenomenology: to clarify experience so that the ultimate basis of all knowledge is found. The structure of intersubjectivity and the interaction of subjects are further problems to be investigated by phenomenology, as such structure and such interaction are reflected in experience as elements of it. (Husserl thought so too, but he never got round to publish his results along these lines, *Ideen II*).

All of Stein’s early works –

- *On the Problem of Empathy* (1916);
 - *Contributions to a Philosophical Foundation of Psychology and the Humanities* (1922) (for short translated as *Philosophy of Psychology and the Humanities* and simply called *Beiträge*, with its two treatises “Psychic Causality” and “Individual and Community”); and
 - *An Investigation on the State* (1925)
- treats of the problem of how intersubjectivity is articulated or structured in so far as it is the condition for access to a higher level of objectivity. Their purpose is epistemological but their bearing social, and in this they foreshadow the “linguistic turn” and post-modernity. They investigate, without using the word, the “social construction” (intersubjective constitution) of our world, and by doing so they contribute towards founding the sciences of psychology, the humanities and politics.

Beiträge and An Investigation on the State

Psychic Causality investigates the interplay of causality with motivation and how the psychic energy is spent and restored. It attempts to draw the line between how on the one hand causality occur within the psyche and is experienced within consciousness and on the other motivation is experienced and initiated. Our psyche, in fact, is experienced as this web of causal-motivational interactions, over which I have no despotic power (as it is causal), but in which nevertheless freedom is inevitably invested (in so far as it is motivated). The psyche as this web is the region and formal object of psychology. Clarifying the distinction therefore contributes towards founding it.

Individual and Community investigates the phenomenon of how (psychic) energy (or power) circulates, how it builds up collective experiences, forms national (or other communal) characters and the spirit of the times. It investigates in other words the web of causal-motivational structures writ large in society and how they form communal experience, which is the region and the formal object of history, literature and all the humanities. Clarifying this contributes towards founding these sciences.

An Investigation of the State investigates the phenomenon of how power (the causal-motivational web incarnate in social relations) is institutionalised. It shows how community expresses itself or gains access to expressing itself, by way of acting in legislating, promulgating and reinforcing laws. The State is seen as a (self) expression of a community, an ideal reality realised by the community, in and through the circulation of power including response to values.

From 1925 to *Finite and Eternal Being*

Stein was baptised 1922, and no way opens for her in academia. She was a woman and was therefore not allowed to “habilitate” on the three works above. She starts teaching Latin and German at a Dominican School in Speyer, where she also translates Newman’s *Diaries* and Thomas Aquinas’ *On Truth*. Encouraged to go for habilitation a second (*Act and Potency*) and a third time (*Introduction to Phenomenology*), she eventually gets a job in teacher training at the Marianum. Here she composes *The Structure of the Human Person* and *What is Being Human?* and projects her final work *Finite and Eternal Being*. She was dismissed because she is a Jewess, and enters Carmel in Köln, where she writes the *Science of the Cross* and finishes *Finite and Eternal Being*, which is in the press when she is taken to Auschwitz, but not published till after the war.

Systematically she maintains the Cartesian starting point for her enquiry into the meaning of being.

Stein: Act and Potency

- The meaning of being
- Potency and Act
- Temporality

The Meaning of Being

Husserl, as we saw, used the term ‘being’ about transcendental subjectivity, which he may understand to be in and for itself, and about the cosmic or natural world in its dependency on transcendental subjectivity (handout 21/3-2003). He does not engage in reflection in on what is common between these two kinds of being. Their relationship is obviously thought of as one of dependency – the being of the cosmic world is dependent on the being of the transcendental ego, which in turn is not dependent on anything else.

Thomas would – to describe the relationship between different kinds of being, and hence also to characterise the relationship between intelligent being and being – talk about the analogy of being; *analogia entis*. He conceives of the universe as organised hierarchically in higher and lower according to “degrees” of being. Degrees of being depend on actuality or potentiality, so that actual being has priority in relation to potential being. Hence the goal has priority over the process, the final cause over the efficient, the active intellect over the passive, the fully formed over the potentially formed. Understanding is an activity that renders actual what is potentially intelligible, and because rational beings are capable of such actualisation, they have priority over beings, which are not. This is another way of expressing dependence: potential beings depend on actual ones for their actualisation, because their potentiality alone does not necessitate their actualisation. The faculty of the intellect, for example, is capable of knowing the reproductive cycle of crocodiles, but without it being actualised by actual crocodiles (or by actual knowledge of them) it will never know. This is how the object of the intellect actualises faculty or the power of the intellect (and why the phenomenological use of the word ‘act’ to designate the mental act corresponding to the object, makes perfect scholastic sense).

If, then, we want to understand the meaning of the term ‘being’, as used by Husserl, we could use the Aristotelian/Thomistic division of it into either actual or potential; dependent or absolute. The two forms of being have this in common: that one is actually what the other is potentially. That is why they are *either/or* and cannot be separated.

Haec autem comparatio invenitur esse inter animam intellectivam et phantasmata. Habet enim anima intellectiva aliquid in actu ad quod phantasmata est in potentia: et ad aliquid est in potentia quod in phantasmatibus actu invenitur. Thomas Aquinas:

Now this is how our understanding mind relate to images [phenomena]. For in one respect the mind is actually what images are potentially; and in another images are actually what the mind is potentially. McDermot: Aquinas: *Selected Philosophical*

Aristotle included in his dictionary a fourth sense of being:

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| Επι το ειναι σεμαινει και το ον, το μεν δυναμει ρητον, το δ εντελεχεια των ειρημενων τουτον. 1017b | Finally, “to be” or “being” mean sometimes that what is said is true potentially; and at other times actually. Hope, Book V, 7 | Again, “to be” <or “is”> means that some of these statements are made in virtue of a potentiality and others in virtue of an actuality. (Tredennick, Loeb) |
|---|---|--|

Being, according to him, is said of power or of achievement respectively. This is expanded upon in book IX/Θ.

Act and Potency

What is possibility, power, dynamism, energy, capacity (*dunamij*)?

What is actuality, achievement, fulfilment, finalisation, perfection (*entelekeia*)?

Aristotle does not seem to think that these are either accidents, substances or truths, as he distinguishes these from the fourth sense of being (which is the being is either possibility or actuality). Being is, in other words, said, not only about accidents, substances and truths, but also about power *or* achievement. Like truth is said about being whether it is accidental, substantial, potential or actual, actuality *or* potentiality is said about all being whether accidental, substantial or true. Being is in other words universally *modal*.

Stein chooses this modal approach to being because this sense of being is accessible to both phenomenology and metaphysics. Of cosmic order, as well as of the inner life of phenomenologically reduced experience, act and potency are irreducible features. When I turn towards being, whether in the cosmic or in the transcendental sense, it “falls apart” in being and not-being – in something that it is and something it is not – because we experience becoming.

Temporality

When I turn toward being as it is in itself, it reveals to me a dual aspect: that of being and that not-being. The “I am” is unable to endure this dual perspective: that in which I am is subject to change and since being and the intellectual movement (“in which” I am) are not separated, this being is likewise subject to change. The “former” state of being is past and has given way to the “present” state of being. This means that the being of which I am conscious as mine is inseparable from temporality. As actual being – that is, as actually present being – it is without a temporal dimension: it is a “now” in between a “no longer” and a “not yet”. But by its breaking apart in its flux into being and not-being, the *idea of pure being* is revealed to us. In pure being there is no longer any admixture of not-being, nor any “no longer” and “not yet”. In short, pure being is not temporal but *eternal*.

Stein: From the Transcendental Ego to the “pure I”

- Formal Ontology and Transcendental Phenomenology
- The finitude of temporal experience
- Rational experience and faith

Formal Ontology and Transcendental Phenomenology

Potenz und Akt, Stein’s third habilitation-thesis for Freiburg 1931, forms the template on which *Finite and Eternal Being* is conceived. It embodies an earlier stage of the synthesis between classical and Christian metaphysics and modern thinking in the form of Husserl’s phenomenology. It is said about it that:

Stein requires, like Husserl, a ‘starting-point’ (“Ursprungsbetrachtung”). [but] for Stein the fact of the activity of the subject is not an occasion to suspend the question of the being of this immanent act, but this act itself, its actuality, discloses in its temporality, i.e. in its continual passing from potentiality to actuality, *ex negativo* the “idea of pure being”, which escapes temporality. (..) If Husserl takes the starting-point to clear the absolute immanent sphere of transcendental subjectivity, so Stein takes the constituting function of subjectivity as an occasion to show that subjectivity needs and refers to something that it is itself not. That it is constituting – and that means that it is “temporalizing” time and “decaying” subjectivity – refers it to something non-temporal; that it constantly constitutes something refers it to something that does not coincide with its own immanent being. Thus Stein is brought to affirm that a sphere of pure being (a transcendent sphere in a second sense) must be distinguished from both the immanent sphere and the sphere of transcendence announced in the former as distinct.

Thus is revealed that formal ontology is not, for Stein, as it is for Husserl, subordinated to transcendental phenomenology, but stands in a reciprocal relationship with it. Formal ontology is for Stein referred to transcendental phenomenology, in so far as this latter is not only treating of the relationship between the immanent and the transcendental spheres, but also must question the constitution of the entities of formal ontology. In the opposite direction is transcendental philosophy referred to formal ontology, not only because it is the task of the latter to determine the meaning of immanence in conjunction with the material ontologies, but because it falls to it to clarify in a general way the fundamental ontological concepts. (Hans Rainer Sepp: “Einführung des Bearbeiters” in *Potenz und Akt*, Herder, ESW XVIII, 1998, my translation).

In *Finite and Eternal Being*, the idea of a formal ontology (dependant on but distinct from transcendental phenomenology) is superseded together with the idea that phenomenology provides an absolute starting-point and a universally applicable method. Stein is now investigating the idea of pure being and its disjunction into act and potency with regards to the transcendental as well as the immanent sphere. This does not mean that she gives up the idea of a starting-point within experience (she just cannot regard it as absolute), nor that she gives up phenomenology as a method (she just being as if it was a phenomenon). Her starting-point therefore is the confidence of being in its cosmic, social, political and religious dimensions, in the ‘fact of our own being’. Her method is phenomenological only in so far as her object *being* lends itself to being investigated phenomenologically, i.e. in so far as it appears. In so far as it is the opposite of appearance (as Parmenides, Plato and Husserl thought), it must be ‘heard of’ as

understood by others, and be interpreted from their understandings. Stein therefore conducts an analysis, which is both hermeneutic and phenomenological.

The finitude of temporal experience

The fully alive and present actual I is something of which I know. But it does not quite match up to the experience I have of my own experience. I live in time: remembering a past, living on a sword's edge in the present, constantly turning present into past, and awaiting the next moment.

If then our consciousness takes hold of the actually present, the latter *reveals* itself to us as something which, rising out of darkness, passes through a ray of light only to sink back into darkness. Or we may picture the actually present as the crest of a wave which itself is part of a mighty stream. These metaphors are evidently employed to describe a kind of being which endures but which is not actual throughout the entire extension of its duration.

How are we to understand this last statement? There is something in what I am now which I am not actually but which I shall be actually at some future time. And what I am now actually I was at some time in the past, but not actually. In other words, my present being contains in itself the *possibility or potentiality* [*Möglichkeit*] of future actual being and presupposes a possibility or potentiality in my former being. My present being is simultaneously actual and potential being; and in so far as it is actual, it is the concrete realisation of possibility, which antecedes my present actuality. (*Finite and Eternal Being*, p. 38-39).

I can only grasp the present within this flow or, as it were, surrounded by potentiality, in the same way as a point can only be understood in relation to its surroundings. The potentiality surrounding me, on the other hand, can only be understood in relation to my actuality now. So, I can only understand the 'I' of my present experience to be both actual and potential: if it were either on its own, it would not be. In fact I understand my experience as structured in units (units of experience) defined by their objects considered as transcending the stream. What I do now is something I have done for a while and will do for a while; something that holds its being from the actual present, however, as nothing *is* in the past or in the future. But how come I understand? How come I have access to something transcending the stream? What it is that we do reveals to us the idea of true being: we do understand, we do regard ourselves as experiencing something, and this what is actually with the actuality of the now.

Rational experience and faith

My own being, as I know it and as I know myself in it, is null and void [*nichtig*]; I am not by myself (not a being *a se* and *per se*), and by myself I am nothing: at every moment I find myself face to face with nothingness, and from moment to moment I must be endowed and re-endowed with being. And yet this empty existence that I am is *being*, and at every moment I am in touch with the fullness of being (*Finite and Eternal Being*, p. 55).

This fullness takes on various forms: presence, amplitude and intensity, and it can fill my experience. However, anguish also can. It does so in pathological cases, but this does not seem a more rational response than the confidence of the child on a parent's arm. The lack of an absolute starting-point in the fact of my own experience allows cosmic, social, political and religious elements to support my quest for the absolute foundation for experience.

Edith Stein: From the Transcendental Ego to Eternal Being

- The sources of the pure I
- The idea of eternal being
- Degrees of proximity to the fullness of being

The sources of the pure I

It is time now to ask: Whence comes this received being? According to what has been said concerning the life of the ego, there seem to be several possibilities of answering this question. Either the ego receives its life as well as the contents of its experiences from those “transcendent worlds” – external or internal or both – which manifest themselves in these experiences, or the ego owes its being directly to that pure being which is by itself and in itself [*a se* and *per se*], externally immutable, autonomous and necessary. This second possibility would not absolutely exclude the first one. If it were admitted that the ego is placed into and sustained in existence by a direct act of pure being, then there might well be assumed an additional dependence of its life on either the external or the internal world, or on both. A received being, on the other hand, that is independent of eternal being is inconceivable because, aside from eternal being, nothing exists that is truly in full possession of being. (*Finite and Eternal Being*, p. 55).

My being as I experience it, suspended over a sword's-edge between future and past, is never present in all that it is, but always potential in some parts. It is therefore experienced as received, as I cannot always conjure up at will its actualisation. I cannot make there to be a future, nor fully make it be what I like it to be, even if I must plan for it and act into it. Also, it is not due to me, that I have a past, even if I can remember it to be, and in my memory shapes “my past” as what has counted for me. The receivedness of my being is hence the fact that I must accept in confidence, that there is whatever there is – indeed accept in confidence the being of my limited being in its mixture with nothingness. It is only when I accept my potentiality, and hence my mixture with nothing, that I can see and say that I am something – because it is only in virtue of the potentiality surrounding me, that I am comprehensible as myself to myself. This potentiality is on the one hand the two transcendent worlds – the inner and the outer – and on the other hand that in virtue of which or of which I am potential: being as such in contradistinction from becoming. I depend on these, receive from them, because I am potential “of” them, i.e. can actualise some aspects of them. However, I cannot do this without it being *them* that I realise, i.e. without it being something that I realise *in* them. To the extent that I realise them, they are sources of my being.

The idea of eternal being

Those experiential units which are in the modes of becoming and passing away stand in need of the ego in order to attain to being. But the being they receive through the medium of the ego is not eternally immutable but is merely this very becoming and passing away, with an added crest of being at the moment of transition from the phase of becoming to the phase of passing away. The

ego itself seems to be closer to pure being because it attains not only to the crest of being for one single moment, but is sustained in it at *every* moment (though not, to be sure, as immutable being, but as being that constantly changes in its existential content).

The ego is capable of arriving at the idea of eternal being not only by way of envisaging the becoming and fading away of its experiences, but also on the basis of the experienced specific nature of its own being, which is confined to an existence from moment to moment. The ego shrinks back from nothingness and desires not only an endless continuation of its own being but a full possession of being as such: It desires a being capable of embracing the totality of the ego's contents in one changeless present instead of having to witness the continually repeated disappearance of these contents almost at the very moment they have ascended onto the stage of life. The ego thus arrives at the *idea of plenitude* [*Idee der Fülle*] by crossing out from its own being what it has come to know as privation. (Ibid, p. 56).

The ego discovers itself desiring plenitude. Its partial realisations of particular things, the enterprise of realising (actualising, paying attention to) at all seems to express this very desire. Trying to know is trying to realise, and hence the desire to know is the desire for being or the desire to be. Inherent in this desire is found *as its object* the idea of pure (i.e. fully actual, not blended with potentiality) being, eternal being.

Degrees of proximity to the fullness of being

The ego, moreover, experiences in its own self *various degrees of approximation to the fullness of being*. Its *present* (what fills it now) does not always exhibit the same circumference. This may be explained by the fact that the ego may be comprised of more or less content at different moments. But there is also the further fact that the ego itself has at different moments a larger or smaller *amplitude*. And a similar observation may be made regarding the manner in which the ego is related to what it – still or already – firmly holds in its grip of the contents of past and future.

To these differences in amplitude must be added those in the *degrees of vitality in the ego's present existence*, i.e. its greater or lesser *intensity* of being. Proceeding intellectually beyond all the stages within its own reach to the outer limit of what can be conceived by the human mind, the ego is capable of arriving at the idea of *all-embracing* being in its *highest degree of intensity*. This procedure confirms our previous contention (pp. 49 – 50 above) that the continuous actuality of the ego admits of varying degrees. In comparison with the perfect being of the *pure act*, the *actual* being of the ego appears as an infinitely far removed and feeble image, but even in this remoteness from the primordial prototype there are found different *gradations* of being. And as against those rudimentary modes of being which we designated as *potentiality*, the actual being of the ego appears so clearly marked off that it would be highly inappropriate to include it in the category of potentiality, notwithstanding its gradations and the possibility of its passing over from lower to higher degrees. At most, one might be entitled to speak of a combination of actuality and potentiality. This “combination” however, is different from the one we referred to in our discussion of experiential units (p. 43 – 44 above). (Ibid, p. 56 – 57).

The ego comes to experience, through its degrees of proximity to the fullness of being that it is, and despite its presence and actuality, itself as a mere shadow of pure actuality. The idea of a pure, actual I, in whom no potentiality would be mixed, therefore comes to it, as other, of course, than itself, but as radically possible and desirable, even as its own template or prototype.

Husserl's transcendental ego has thus been ‘split open’ – Stein distinguishes within the experience of the pure I, an I experiencing itself as finite and an ideal I beyond time in which all experienced contents would be fully present and actual.

Conclusions

- What we have done
- What is (substance – being – phenomenon)
- What is metaphysics? (phenomenology – ontology – theology)

What we have done

In the course of this semester we have studied three authors (Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas and Edith Stein) asking three questions: ‘What is metaphysics?’; ‘What happened as metaphysics was Christianised?’ And ‘What happened as metaphysics was modernised?’. To answer these questions we have studied auxiliary authors (Hildegard von Bingen, Descartes and Husserl) and reflected on the socio-economic reasons for the development of metaphysics.

We have treated of being, mind and truth in their systematic connection, true to the determination of the subject of ‘metaphysics’ in Aristotle’s course on of first philosophy. He defined it as *wisdom or knowledge concerning principles and causes*, the *science of being qua being*, and as *first philosophy*, the common presupposition for the sciences. Metaphysics, therefore, is about ‘first things’, about whatever comes first in the order of things, the necessary presuppositions and knowledge or mind’s relativity to them. It is about the ultimate, the limit, that beyond which we can know nothing and cannot go. Hence it is striking that Aristotle makes *ousia* (substance) and not for example essence (*to\ ti/ h)=n ei)=nai*) that about which first philosophy is primarily. For Aristotle the ultimate is substance and, if there exists immutable substance, such substance. That such substance must be mind arises from the fact that only mind is independent or perfect activity, and hence is first.

The Christianisation of metaphysics placed the Aristotelian search for the ultimate in the context of God, *I/Goj*, having become man in Christ Jesus, making possible an anthropocentric individualism henceforth rendering inseparable Christianity and metaphysics. It is such confidence that lies behind Aquinas’ identification of being as the first concept of the mind, and of truth as mind’s correspondence with it. But with the Cartesian doubt resulting from the shattering of Christian unity the correspondence theory came to look tacky. Methods – in the new scientific style – had to be applied for truth to be discerned, and the theory of truth became concerned with criteria. This originated the splitting off of epistemology from metaphysics, and the consequent truncation of the mother science. In the face of factions warring about origins (God or state), metaphysics became feared and ridiculed as ideology.

Phenomenology set out to provide anew the basis without which science no longer makes sense, and attempted to find in the Cartesian starting-point such basis. It is from here that Stein ‘rediscovers’ the centrality of being, common to the ‘I am’ and the being of the phenomena, and investigates its ‘appearance’ in the life of the mind.

What is (substance – being – phenomenon)

For Aristotle being as being was primarily substance, and substance (ousia) “that about which everything else is said”. Substance, or primary being, is hence the primary unit(s) about which we talk: things. Not only things (substances) but all categories of being have essence – i.e. have something that they are (το τι εν ειναι). What things are, is known and explained by means of their causes and principles (εξ ου, ειδοσ, αρχη, τελος). But what things are is beyond their explanations. Even so, it is understood in them.

For Aquinas being (esse) is what has this something that it is is - or rather, being is had in and through essence (essentia): essence is the means of identification of being, and truth is what reveals it.

For Stein, phenomena are what appears, a phenomenon is the identification of what appears. This can only happen through the identification of units of experience, which in turn are identified by their objects. These units of experience transcend in their transcendent objects experience: in so far as these latter explain the former. The objects are, thus, “that about which experience is had”. In so far as these objects identify experience, they are, whether as part of the inner or outer worlds, actually being in so far as they explain. The “essential realm” is what can be understood of what is. It is “what” is, as nothing can be something, unless it is “a what”. Units of experience and substances are identified in the same manner: by their essence, by what they are. They could not be identified in any other manner.

What metaphysics is (ontology – theology – phenomenology)

Aristotle was interested in *being qua being*, which was something that it was for it to be (το τι εν ειναι) for it to be anything. He saw no way of separating being (το ον) from what it was (το τι εν ειναι) for it to be, though he did not regard these to be identical. What it is for anything to be is thought (νοη) or understood by means of causes and principles, and the ultimate principle of explanation would be what it was to be for being.

Aquinas explains that this principle is God, whose essence and existence coincide. This is how things can differ from Him, He being pure being, everything else being composite of essence and existence. In Him also being and truth coincide, as what it is for Him to be is to be. And this is revealed in being.

Stein expresses this “grasp” of pure being as “groping search in darkness revealing to us the incomprehensible one as inescapably near”. I.e. in all explanation, all understanding, all experience: in what it is for anything to be. If metaphysics is the science of being as being, and being is “what it is for it to be”, metaphysics may start from phenomenology (describing what appears, and explaining it in terms of what it appears to be (its essence)). It may then proceed to systematise this knowledge in regional and formal ontologies, which serves as foundation for the sciences, and finally found these in absolute experience. Metaphysics has all these elements, as it is about the necessary conditions of experience (its reasons) and being is primarily what necessarily is.