

Thinking and Being: From Parmenides until today

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1. **Being: Parmenides and Plato** (Mon, 22.04.2024, 14:10–16:10)

The concept of being has recently experienced a revival in philosophical discussion, as the books by Irad Kimhi (*Thinking and Being*, Harvard UP 2018) and Michael Della Rocca (*The Parmenidean Ascent*, Oxford UP 2020) show. In this lecture we shall go back to the Greek origins of the debate: the fragments of Parmenides' poem and the reception of Parmenides in Plato's *Sophist*. The strength of radical monism, i.e. the thesis that there is nothing but singular homogeneous being, will be developed. Then Plato's way out to save the phenomena (of distinctions, multitude and becoming) will be discussed, namely his thesis that being is one of several highest genera (*megista genē*). In preparation, students are invited to study Parmenides' poem, esp. fragments 1–8, and Plato's, *Sophist*, esp. 236c–265e.

Parmenides of Elea, 520/515 BCE – 460/455 BCE (BCE: Before Common Era).

Poem: *Peri physeōs* (a standard title: *About physis*), preserved in **fragments**, cited according to the numbering of Diels (and Kranz, "DK").

The metre (verse measure) forces unusual linguistic measures. And unlike Homer and Hesiod, Parmenides was not a poet, but a thinker.

Like Hesiod in the *Theogony*, he begins with an experience in the first person. As a young man, he is brought to and received by a goddess who instructs him. The poem then passes on the goddess's teachings, and does so in an **argumentative mode**.

There are various conflicting **interpretations** of the poem. No wonder, “[g]iven the paucity of text and the bewildering ambiguities in Parmenides’ syntax and vocabulary” (Alexander Mourelatos, *The Route of Parmenides*, revised and expanded edition, Las Vegas: Parmenides, 2008, p. xxvi).

Mourelatos interprets:

Parmenides rejects constitutive negation (“negation which is *in* the world as part of its structure”, op. cit. 79-80), not supervenient negation. Each thing is monistic, but there are many (non-strict-monism; cf. classical atomism).

Della Rocca (*The Parmenidean Ascent*, Oxford 2020) interprets with Plato & Aristotle: strict monism; no negation, no distinctions, no plurality, no becoming; just Being.

Della Rocca **himself**, as a systematic philosopher, argues for strict monism (mostly with the principle of sufficient reason, the **PSR**): There are

no beings/substances, but just being/substance,
 no actions, but just action,
 no particular cases of knowledge, but just knowledge,
 no meanings, but just meaning.
 Plus: being/substance = action = knowledge = meaning.

His chapter “**12. Tractatus Parmenideo-Philosophicus**” (p. 291) has no text.

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Parmenides’ poem has a **proem** and two **parts**.

Proem: A young man (“I”) is brought and escorted to a goddess who instructs him on being (part 1) and illusion (shine, *doxa*; part 2). This is the **mythological** framing of the purely **logical** content that then follows.

Part 1: Strict monism.

Part 2: Cosmology in the mode of “shine” (Parmenides’ way of saving the phenomena).
 Our topic: Strict monism (thus part 1).

The goddess explains (**fragment 2**) that there are two imaginable **paths** or ways of inquiry: (1) the way of being, (2) the way of non-being. One could either have the idea of investigating what is (what is the case) or of investigating what is not (what is not the case). But this second path is indeed impossible to pursue, or so the goddess argues.

Part 1 of the poem then explores the **first path** which leads to strict monism. Part 2 does not outline the second path, which is precisely impossible, but something else: an illusionary, imaginary **mixture** of both paths. i.e. a contradictory mixture of being and non-being concocted by us mortals. This mixture creates the illusion of distinctions, multiplicity, becoming, in short, the illusion of the spatiotemporal **cosmos**. This is Parmenides’ way of saving the phenomena.

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Fragment 3: “... τὸ γὰρ αὐτὸ νοεῖν ἐστὶν τε καὶ εἶναι.”
 ... the namely same thinking is as well as being
 ... for the same is thinking and being.

Della Rocca: ... for it is the same to think and also to be. (p. xx)
 ... for what thinks is and what is thinks.

An alternative, deflationary translation takes the infinitives (*noein, einai*) as datives:
 ... for the same is to/for thinking as well as to/for being.
 ... for what can be thought is the case and what is the case can be thought.

Fragment 2, 7f.: *oúte gàr àn gnoíēs tó ge mē eòn (ou gàr anystón)*
oúte phrásais.

Neither namely will you cognise the non-being (not namely is it feasible)
 nor enunciate it.

For you will neither cognise what is not the case (for it is not feasible)
 nor enunciate it.

Compare **Wittgenstein**, *Philosophische Untersuchungen*, #95:

„Denken muss etwas Einzigartiges sein.“ Wenn wir sagen, *meinen*, dass es sich so und so verhält, so halten wir mit dem, was wir meinen, nicht irgendwo vor der Tatsache: sondern meinen, dass *das und das – so und so – ist*. – Man kann aber dieses Paradox (welches ja die Form einer Selbstverständlichkeit hat) auch so ausdrücken: Man kann *denken*, was nicht der Fall ist.

“Thinking must be something unique.” When we say, *mean*, that such-and-such is the case, then, with what we mean, we do not stop anywhere in front of the fact: but mean that *such-and-such—is—so-and-so*. – However, this paradox (which indeed has the form of a truism) can also be expressed in this way: one can *think* what is not the case.

Wittgenstein **with** Parmenides: Thinking reaches all the way to being (to what is the case).
 Wittgenstein **against** Parmenides: One can think (and say) what is not the case.

That we can think what is not the case, is a paradox (Parmenides agrees) and a truism (Parmenides disagrees).

Why a paradox? Well, thinking reaches all the way to being. That’s where it draws its content from. But what is not the case cannot be reached to. So there is no possible content *non-being*. Nevertheless, we can think truthfully or falsely what is not the case, for example that snow is not green (true) or that snow is green (false).

Diagnosis:

Since thinking reaches all the way to being, thinking must be basically **presentational**.

Since one can think what is not the case, thinking must be basically **re-presentational**.

Since thinking is essentially articulated linguistically and since language seems to be representational, we tend to think that thinking is representational as well. This will be refuted in lecture 3. Today we will stay with Parmenides and then move on to Plato.

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Parmenides’ fragments are cryptic and can be interpreted in many directions. But it seems that he takes a **presentational view** of thought and concludes very consistently that non-being cannot be the case and cannot be thought. Where there is nothing, nothing can present itself. *Ex nihilo nihil fit*; from nothing comes nothing. This is an application of **the principle of sufficient reason** (PSR), which Della Rocca likewise uses for his justification of strict monism.

But if non-being is neither the case nor can it be thought, there is no thing that is *not* another thing. All things are therefore identical. There are then **no distinctions** and no multiplicity and also no becoming, there is only the **singular homogeneous being**.

It goes without saying that in the end Parmenides and Della Rocca have to throw away the argument in favour of strict monism, like a **ladder** that was necessary for their Parmenidean ascent but is now no longer usable.

Now to **Plato** (428/27–348/47, Athens).

The Sophist:

A stranger from Elea, a pupil of Parmenides, visits Athens and is asked by Socrates to explain what the Eleatic philosophers think about the sophist. The **Stranger** chooses the young mathematician **Theaetetus** as his interlocuter and attempts to determine the sophist as a craftsman in the art of creating **images of things in words**. But this is also true of the **philosopher**: He¹ makes images in words (*logoi*, propositions) of what is. [This, by the way, seems to be an example of a **representational** conception of thought. In Plato – and in Aristotle – discursive thinking, *diánoia*, is representational and an assumed intuitive thinking, *nóēsis*, is presentational. The *Sophist* is mostly about discursive, representational thinking.]

The Stranger wishes to distinguish between philosophers and sophists and between **correct** images and **deceptive** images and tries to **define the sophist** as a maker of deceptive verbal images of things. Theaetetus seems satisfied with this definition, but the stranger himself points out a serious problem (236c ff.):

The sophist will invoke Parmenides, of all people, and say that according to Parmenides, non-being cannot be thought and cannot be represented as being. Therefore, error, falsity and deception are impossible. So he, the sophist, is not a producer of deceptive images. According to Parmenides, deceptive images cannot exist. **We cannot think or say what is not the case.**

Therefore, a difficult task now arises: The Stranger says that one must examine the theorem of **Father Parmenides** and ensure that non-being is in a certain way and that being is not, in a certain way (241d). (He apologises, saying he doesn't want to become a patricide, father killer. But in fact he will become one.)

Examples: That snow is green *is* a falsehood. [Non-being *is* in a certain way.]
Snow is not green. [Being – here snow – *is not*, in certain way.]

The Stranger and Theaetetus agree on the following **procedure** for the examination: They will ask what the predecessors understand by being and will let them appear one after the other in the imagination so that they can be questioned (243d ff.).

- (1) The dualists (or pluralists) (243d ff.)
- (2) The monists (244b ff.)
- (3) The materialists (246d ff.)
- (4) The friends of Forms or Ideas (248a ff.)

The parties (3) and (4) are embroiled in a *gigantomachía* (giant battle) over the *ousia*, i.e. substance or being. But the Stranger takes all four positions in turn.

Ad (1), the dualists/pluralists. They posit two (or more) ontological principles, A and B, for example the warm and the cold. Both principles *are* (are the case or exist).

A (the warm) is.

B (the cold) is.

But then being must be posited as a third principle: A, B and being.

¹ Plato (or the Stranger) either uses the generic masculine or thinks only of male philosophers, not, for example, of Diotima, who, according to the dialogue *Symposium*, introduced Socrates to philosophy.

So the dualists become trialists against their will, but that doesn't have to be a bad thing. They could say: Yes, thank you, we need a third principle, being. We hadn't thought of that. Now we know.

But now things are becoming aporetic for them. How do the three principles – A, B and being – differ from each other? All three must *be*. That is their common generic trait. But how can the genus *being* be differentiated? Not at all!

The difference must *be* (in order to differentiate). It is *either* identical with being or different from being. If it is identical, it cannot differentiate being: nothing can differentiate itself. *Or* the difference is distinct from being, but then being must have already been differentiated by another difference, and we get an infinite regress or vicious circle of differentiation.

So dualism (or indeed pluralism) collapses into (strict) **monism**.

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Ad (2), the monists. Interestingly, the Eleatic Stranger does not have much trouble refuting strict monism, which he himself had learnt from Parmenides. Monists say that being is *one*, so they have *two* words for it: “being” and “one”, which is ridiculous for monists. And if they give up the second word, they still have a name for being: “being”. But according to monism, the name and the named must be one, not two. So, being would be a name that names itself.

In addition, Parmenides, in fragment 8, 43–45, compares being to a homogeneous sphere. Perhaps we can imagine the sun for comparison. (That would then be the first *simile of the sun* in Western philosophy.) But a sphere has a centre and a periphery, i.e. many parts, contrary to strict monism.

Neither standard pluralisms nor standard monism are thus viable ontologies. This motivates the Stranger to change his perspective and consider the gigantomachy of the materialists and the friends of Forms or Ideas.

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Ad (3), the materialists. They are the opposite of the sophists. The *sophists* ignore things and only pay attention to words. The *materialists*, on the other hand, do not listen to words (arguments), but only point to material things. So you can't talk to them at all.

If you want them to tell us what they understand by *being*, you first have to make them fictionally a little better than they are. That is the first move of the Stranger.

The improved materialists then concede that not everything that is the case or exists is material; after all, there are also such things as virtues and vices and other mental phenomena that play *causal roles* in the material world. Therefore, the Stranger comes to an agreement with the materialists that *to be* means as much as to have some causal role (*dýnamis*).

This is an astonishingly modern position, considering that even today's materialists in the philosophy of mind would like to understand the mental in *functionalist* terms of causal roles (David Lewis).

The improved materialists are not refuted by the Stranger, but he now goes straight to the friends of Forms.

Ad (4), the friends of Forms/Ideas (*eídē*). This is Plato's own doctrine. But the Stranger starts with a caricature. The friends of Forms distinguish between *becoming* (*genesis*), which we perceive corporeally, and eternal *being* (*ousia*), which our soul recognises by thinking.

The caricature of the doctrine of Forms does not acknowledge causality and thus movement (*poiēîn – páschein* and *kínēsis*) in the realm of Forms. But cognising and being cognised is a causal process, and causal processes include movement in a certain sense. Therefore, the be-

ing par excellence (*tò pantelôs ón*), i.e. the realm of forms, must have (ideal) **movement**, **reason** and **life** and thus also **soul** (249a).

Many interpreters want to play down this statement, including **Heidegger**, who says that Forms are not ghosts that float around animatedly. What Plato actually meant was that reason, life and soul also belong to being, namely in the guise as thinking animals like us.

But that can't be right. When the Forms are recognised by us, they are moved. So they themselves must have movement. And this is what the stranger also says: the ideal being has *noûs*, *zōē*, *psychē*: reason, life and soul. The cosmos of Forms is **an ideal living being**, as can also be seen from the dialogue *Timaeus*. It is not a realm of abstract entities, but an organism of powerful, concrete actualities.

This is the game changer that Plato or the Stranger brings into play. Unlike the standard pluralists, we now have something like a **priority monism** (as currently advocated in a different way in analytic metaphysics by **Jonathan Schaffer**, "Monism: The Priority of the Whole", in: *Philosophical Review* 119, 2010, 31-76).

Today's priority monism (Jonathan Schaffer):

The physical universe (spatiotemporal cosmos) as a whole has metaphysical priority over its parts (thing, persons, ...).

This is not a strict monism, because the multiplicity of things is acknowledged. But there is only one basic entity: the spatiotemporal cosmos.

Plato's priority monism of Forms:

The ideal universe (cosmos of Forms/Ideas) as a whole has metaphysical priority over its parts (many Forms/Ideas). There are many Forms, but only one basic ideal whole.

According to the dialogue *Timaeus*, the ideal cosmos of being is the paradigm or archetype of the material cosmos of becoming. In this way the priority monism of the cosmos of Forms is also transferred to the spatiotemporal cosmos. (Just as the ideal cosmos has an ideal soul, so the material cosmos has a world soul that permeates and animates the material world.)

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So what does all this mean for being and what does it mean for the possibility of error and deception?

Movement and **rest** must both occur in the cosmos of Forms. They are two principles and both are distinct from **being**, which is a third principle. The Stranger mentions two further principles: **identity** and **difference**, which are also distinct from being. These five principles are Forms/Ideas, and they are highest, most universal Forms/Ideas. Plato or the Stranger calls them *mégista génē*, largest genera. (It remains open whether there are other largest genera besides these five).

So why does this new, Platonic pluralism of principles **not collapse into monism**, as is the case with standard pluralism?

The **answer** is: one must distinguish between what a largest genus is **for itself**, according to its own nature, and what it is **in relation to and thanks to the others**. For example, being for itself is only being, not identical with itself, not different from anything else, neither in motion nor at rest. Similarly, identity is only identical to itself, not being, not different from others, etc.

In order for being to be identical with itself and to be in rest or in motion etc., it must allow the genera of identity, rest and movement etc. to participate in it. Only then do these genera have being, and only then can being also participate in them in return. The largest genera are

therefore in a reciprocal relationship of give and take and all benefit from it – like the various organs in an organism.

Plato does not say so, but we may conclude that the *cosmos of Ideas as a whole* also owes its being to the genus being and its identity with itself to the genus identity, etc. The cosmos of ideas is a *living being*, an *organism* – living not in the *biological* sense, but in a deeper, *logical* sense. The largest genera are its basic organs, which all make their contribution to the existence and nature of the whole, which has metaphysical priority over them.

This ideal priority monism is *Plato's counter-conception* to Parmenides' strict monism.

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So, how can non-being be thought? Non-being is not a genus, a Form or an Idea. But it can be understood as the **collective term** for those genera that are not being. They all together form the realm of non-being, namely that which is different from the genus being. This, then, is the source and origin of our thinking about non-being.

But the explanation of how **error** and **deception** are possible is still missing. It must be shown that speech (*lógos*) and opinion (*dóxa*) can participate in non-being (260d).

We already understand how multiplicity is possible, because there are various largest genera and many Forms, and we already understand how non-being can be thought, because non-being is the collective term for those genera that are different from the genus being.

Here comes **Plato's innovation**:

Thinking may reach all the way to being, but thinking and speaking are essentially composite, *synthetic*. The smallest *lógos* (thought, sentence, proposition) must have at least two parts: name (*ónoma*) and verb (*rhêma*), subject and predicate, such as “Theaetetus sits” or “Theaetetus flies”.

It is this *predicative structure* that opens up the possibility of **error** and then also the possibility of skilful intentional **deception**, and thus also the possibility of the “craftsmanship” of producing deceptive logical images (deceptive images in words), i.e. of *sophistry*. The **sophist** is “trapped”, i.e. *defined*.

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Summary and outlook:

Parmenides advocates strict monism. His main reason is the presentational character of thinking. (Thinking reaches all the way to being; where there is nothing, nothing can be thought – according to the PSR).

Parmenides tries to save the phenomena by developing a cosmology in the mode of illusion (inconsistent *dóxa* of mortals).

Plato advocates a priority monism for the ideal cosmos (organism) of Forms and derivatively also for the material spatiotemporal cosmos.

He sees the main (prima facie) reason for Parmenides' strict monism not in the presentational character of thinking but in the problem of *differentiating being*. He solves this problem through the theory of give and take between largest genera, only one of which is being.

Outlook: He thereby discovers purely *formal being* (the being that has no other quality than itself), which was again forgotten or neglected by Aristotle, for whom qualitative being: *ousía*, and formal being: *ón*, are one and the same again. Formal being (*ón*, ens) and its difference from qualitative being (*ousía*, essence) was later rediscovered by Ibn Sīnā (Latin: Avicenna), Moses ben Maimon (Maimonides) and Thomas Aquinas.

Last but not least, Plato discovered the *predicative nature* of thought and speech, which makes error and deception possible. This is something that Aristotle did not forget or neglect, but rather emphasised and developed theoretically.

The difference between subject and predicate goes hand in hand with the difference between the existence of things and the obtaining (being the case) of facts. But Plato and Aristotle did not bother to make this difference explicit.

Four questions from the participants and (5) one misleading point on my part (“shine” as a German word):

- 1) Lingual articulation as a ladder to throw away? Yes and no. No, for objective, fallible thinking. Yes, for *asynthetic* thinking (if there is such a thing), cf. Aris. Met. Θ 10.
- 2) Forms considered in isolation: Yes, that kind of consideration is strictly tautological. The PSR applies no longer, or so Plato would have to say.
- 3) Non-Being: A kind of Form? Cf. “Non-heart: a kind of organ?” Yes and no: a collective “organ”.
- 4) The ideal organism of Forms is being, but also: the maximal genus *being* is being. Contradiction? No, the organism of Forms is qualitative being (*ousía*); the genus being is formal being (*ón*).
- 5) English “shine” from the English verb “(to) shine”, just like German “Schein” from “scheinen”.

ME (1066–1575):	shīnen	MHG (1050–1350):	schinen
OE or AS (650–1066):	scinan	OHG (750–1050):	scinan
WPG (500 BCE–500 CE)	skīnan		

WPG: spoken in Northern Germany and the Netherlands. Ancestral language of:

(High and Low) <i>German</i> ,	<i>Dutch</i> ,	<i>English</i> ,	Frisian (only few speakers left)
↓	↓		
Yiddish	Afrikaans		

2. Being and truth: Aristotle (Tue, 23.04.2024, 16–18)

Aristotle proposes a different solution to overcoming radical monism than Plato. He teaches that being is not a genus, but is said in many ways, albeit not homonymously, but with respect to a unitary focus: substance. The ways in which being is expressed also include truth (and falsity). Aristotle's treatment of that topic made him the first theorist of truth in the history of Western philosophy. We will develop his doctrine of being and truth from his *Metaphysics*. In preparation, the chapters Met. B 3, Γ 3, Δ 7, E 4, Z 1 and Θ 10, are recommended. (Dr. Dashuai Wang has written an important and helpful book in German on the manifold meanings of being and Aristotle's doctrine of principles.)

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Like Plato, Aristotle saw the Parmenidean (or Eleatic) challenge in the problem of the differentiation of being. But he *rejected* the solution that Plato proposed with his doctrine of a qualitative give and take between maximal genera.

Aristotle's *first thesis* in the process of overcoming the Parmenidean challenge is his anti-Platonic thesis that *being (ón) is not genus*. (The same, incidentally, is true of the one, τὸ *hén*).

A **genus** is a universal which is differentiated by so-called **specific differences** into various **species**. Example: The genus *animal* is differentiated by the specific difference of *having the lógos* (in Latin: being *rational*) into (a) the species *human being* and (b) the indefinite plurality of other species.

Aristotle's argument for this thesis runs in parallel for being and for the one (cf. Met. B 3, 998b22 ff.), but here we consider only being:

- (1) Genera are differentiated by differences. (Definition of "genus")
- (2) Neither the genus nor a species can be predicated of the relevant difference. (Premise)
- (3) Differences for a "genus" of *being* are not themselves beings. (From (1) and (2))
- (4) Being is not differentiated by differences. (From (1) and (3))
- (5) Being is not a genus. (From (1) and (4))

The validity of the argument depends on the substantial *premise (2)*. This premise states that a difference is not an individual in the species constituted by it or in any other species of the genus in question. *E.g.*: The difference 'having the *lógos*' is not a human being nor some other individual animal.

Why? Because otherwise we would get a vicious circle of differentiation: if a difference were an individual of a species of the genus in question (here: a being of a particular species) – or even just a species of this genus (here a species in the genus being) – the genus would have to be differentiated beforehand. The difference would then be a result of the differentiation that it is supposed to explain.

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The *conclusion (5)* shows which way out of the circle Aristotle will choose. The generality of being, he will teach in his *second thesis* in the process of overcoming the Parmenidean challenge, is more fundamental than any generic generality.

Cf. Met. Γ 2, 1003a33f.: *tó d' òn légetai pollachôs, allà pros hèn kai mían tinà phýsin, kai ouch homōnymōs [...]*, being is said in many ways, but towards one entity und one given *physis*.

In Met. Δ 7 the variety of ways in which *tò ón* is said is set out in more detail. Aristotle starts as follows:

Tò ón légetai tò mèn katà symbebēkós, tò dè kath' hautó. (1017a7f.)

It is a pity that in English there is no distinction between *ón* and *éinai* (ens and esse, Seiendes and Sein). Both are simply being. That's why I use the Greek *ón*. *Tò ón* is *that which is* or *that which is the case*. It can be said, on the one hand, *katà symbebēkós*. *Symbainein* means *to go together*. *Katà symbebēkós* thus means *according to that which has gone together*. On the other hand, *tò ón* can be said *kath' hautó* means *according to itself*.

We must therefore first distinguish whether a single thing, considered by itself, is stated to be, or whether the coming together of several things is stated.

In coming together we have the form “this is this”, for example this: a given human being, is this: educated. Education and human being are two different things; they don't have to be together, but they can come together. The Latin term for *symbebēkós* is *accidens*: that which comes to a thing by chance. So we are talking here about accidental predication.

Predication *kath' hautó* on the other hand, is essential predication. Aristotle explains:

kath' hautà dè éinai légetai hósaper sēmaínei tà schēmata tēs katēgorías (1017a22f.).

The essential statement occurs in as many ways as the forms (*schēmata*) of predication designate something.

Compare “Socrates is a human being” with “Socrates is pale”. What is denoted here by the content and what by the form of the predication? Let us first look at the **content**: *Socrates is a human being*, i.e. not a horse, not a dog, not a tree, not a stone, etc. *Socrates is pale* – according to the content, this is an accidental statement; we can therefore neglect the content (because we are dealing with essential predication).

Let us now look at the form of the predication. In “Socrates is a man”, the logico-grammatical form designates Socrates qua **substance**: A human being, a horse, a tree – these are all substances. In “Socrates is pale”, the form denotes a **quality**, be it essential or accidental. It so happens that Socrates is pale, but what is essential to him is that he has some kind of skin colour.

Here, of course, we are dealing with the so-called categories, with substance (*tí esti, ousía*) and nine others: quality, quantity, relation, doing or suffering, place and time, plus, in Cat. 4, 1b25ff., the kind of position and having. Exactly how many there are is perhaps not so important. According to Aristotle, one must look at what the forms of predication designate in order to discover all the categories. But let's stick to the number 10, namely 1 (i.e. substance) plus 9 (others).

We can visualise the substance as a nine-sided harbour terminal with nine quay walls at which different types of ships, namely different types of accidents, can dock.

Consider the quay wall of the **place**. Socrates is essentially a land creature. So he can happen to be at home or in the marketplace, etc. These accidents can happen to dock at Socrates' quay wall of the place. Now the quay wall of **quantity**: As an adult human being, Socrates has an essential body dimension; he is essentially, say, between 1.50 metres and 2.20 metres tall. So he can happen to be 1.63 metres tall or 1.79 metres tall and so on. These accidents can happen to dock on Socrates' quay wall of quantity. And correspondingly for the other categories.

The nine quay walls (non-substantial categories) belong to the being-in-itself or essence of substance. What docks at each quay wall, however, is accidental, *katà symbebēkós*.

To this first disjunction of essential and accidental predication Aristotle adds a second one: the modal disjunction of capacity and actuality. “Karl plays the piano” can mean that Karl is a piano player, i.e. can play the piano. Or it can mean that Karl is sitting at the piano and actually playing.

So with every predication we must ask, firstly, whether it is essential or accidental, and secondly, whether it predicates a capacity or an actuality.

But I skipped over a third item that Aristotle inserts between the two disjunctions: every predication is a *truth claim*. So being is always stated also in the sense of truth.

But here, too, we can discover a disjunction if we look more closely. Predictions are truth claims, but claims can be unjustified, predications can be false, such as “snow is green”. Then we can reject them by negating them: “It is not the case that snow is green”. By asserting this non-being, we assert the falsity of the predication in question. In this respect, “to be” (*eînai*) means that something is true, and “to be not” means that something is not true but false (1017a31f.).

In Met. E 1 Aristotle distinguishes the three theoretical sciences of mathematics, physics and theology (later called metaphysics) (1026a18f), and asks which is the first. If there were only natural things, physics would be the first; but since there are also immovable things, theology or metaphysics is the first science and a very general one, which regards being qua being, *tò ón hêi ón* (102627-31).

Then in E 2 he declares that there is no science, neither a theoretical nor a practical nor a technical (*poiêtikē*) one, which is concerned with accidental being. And in E 4 he adds that apart from accidental being, true being can also be left aside in the first science (1027b33f.). For the true and the false lie, he says, not in things, but in discursive thinking (*diánoia*).

However, he immediately qualifies this. The simple – *tà haplâ or tà asyntheta* – and the what-is (*tà tí estin*, substance, *ousía*) are not in discursive thinking. Their truth and non-truth must be discussed in metaphysics. The What-is or substance will be discussed in Met. Z and H and the *asyntheta* in the second half of Θ 10, after capacity and actuality will have been discussed in Θ 1–9 and truth and falsity of discursive thinking will have been at least alluded to in the first half of Θ 10.

We skip substance and capacity/actuality and immediately look into the truth chapter Θ 10. Aristotle first points to the realist aspect of discursive truth. Although discursive truth is in thought and not in things, the normative priority is nevertheless in things: “It is not because we truthfully think that you are pale that you are pale, but because you are pale that we think truthfully when we say this.” (1051b6–9)

We should keep this realist or objective aspect of discursive truth in mind for later lectures. But now to the truth of the simple, the non-synthetic. This simple must be grasped and thought intuitively, no longer discursively. Aristotle speaks of *noeîn* (1052a1), and *nóēsis* is a grasping or touching in thought (*thigêîn, thinggánein*, 1051b24f.).

True here means that a simple thing is grasped and thought, “but there is no such thing as falsity, nor error, nor deception, but [only] ignorance” (10521f.), namely when one is not in contact with the simple thing in question. We can see that Aristotle learnt his lesson from Plato: Falsehood, error and deception are only possible in virtue of the synthesis of subject and predicate. Below this synthesis, one is either simply in the truth or completely ignorant.

3. **What should we say about being today?** (Sat, 27.03.2024, 15–17)

In the third lecture we will discuss present debates about being. Thinking goes all the way to being and yet we can think what is not the case. This thesis is at the centre of Irad Kimhi's book on thinking and being. Michael Della Rocca disputes the second part of the thesis and, like Parmenides, argues that we cannot think anything negative and that there is only simple being. Like Kimhi (and like Plato and Parmenides before him), I myself would like to rescue the phenomena and, after having dealt with Kimhi's position, will at least hint at how in the lecture. More about saving the phenomena will be explained in later lectures. Two essays are recommended as preparation:

(1) Michael Della Rocca, "Parmenides' insight and the possibility of logic", in: *The European Journal of Philosophy* 30 (2022), 565–577,

(2) Anton Friedrich Koch, „The sting of negativity: Irad Kimhi and Michael Della Rocca on the Parmenidean challenge“, in: *European Journal of Philosophy*, 2023: <https://doi.org/10.1111/ejop.12888>.

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We talked about the *Parmenidean challenge*: All that is the case and nothing else can be thought. *Irad Kimhi* takes the challenge seriously and wants to rise to it in his book *Thinking and Being*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2018. He paraphrases the problem to the effect "that thinking reaches all the way to that which is the case – that there is no gap between the thought that something is the case and something's being the case" (p. 6). Accordingly, what is not the case cannot be thought.

And yet it is also a truism that we can think what is not the case (see Wittgenstein, PU #95).

We saw how Plato and Aristotle reacted to Parmenides. Today I want to talk about Kimhi's reaction and then also hint at my own proposal. To a large extent I will follow or agree with Kimhi; but on two points I will go beyond him. *Firstly*, I would like to understand *in virtue of what* thinking reaches all the way to what is the case, which remains unanswered with Kimhi. *Secondly*, I don't quite agree with Kimhi's explanation of negation; and above all, his explanation doesn't run deep enough for me.

As far as the first point is concerned, two extra theorems are needed that Kimhi does *not* put forward: (i) a thesis of the *extended consciousness* and (ii) a thesis of the *readability of things*. As to the second point, I want to do justice to it with (iii) the thesis of the *antinomy of negation*. This may sound paradoxical: In order to show that negation is all right, it will be claimed that negation leads to an antinomy (an *incurable* contradiction).

So, more about these *three theses* later, (i) extended consciousness, (ii) readability of things, (iii) antinomy of negation. Let us first look at Kimhi's position. Since his reasoning cannot easily be assembled into a well-structured train of thought, I am grateful for the (aforementioned) article by *Michael Della Rocca*: "Parmenides' insight and the possibility of logic", in: *The European Journal of Philosophy*, 30 (2022), 565–577. There we find a helpful overview of important aspects of Kimhi's argumentation, albeit from the perspective of a critic who (unlike Kimhi and I) considers the Parmenidean riddle of negation to be insoluble.

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Our judgements and assertions are claims to *objective truth*. If we understand objectivity, we also understand that its flip side is our *principled fallibility*. Thus assertions must be understood as possibly false and thus *negatable*. In this respect, it is a *truism* that we can say what is not the case. But since thinking reaches all the way to being and gets its content from there, it is puzzling where our understanding of negation and thus of fallibility and objectivity can

come from. (Of course, Della Rocca would say that the whole game of judgement and objectivity, and thus negation, is illusory.)

Let's start with the *truism*. In this regard, Kimhi (following in the footsteps of Aristotle, *de int.* 7, 17b16–18a12) develops a theory of the *unity of the contradictory pair*, p and $\sim p$.

Since we judge objectively, we must understand ourselves as fallible and our judgements as possibly wrong. We must therefore be able to *reject* judgements. Rejecting a given judgement, 'S is P', leads to a new – and (as we shall see) novel – judgement, its negation, 'S is not P', which states the *contradictory opposite* of 'S is P'.

Thus Aristotle and Kimhi are right to say (1) that a judgement is always understood as one side of a *contradictory pair*, and Kimhi is right to add (2) that the *unity* of the pair (semantically or logically) *dominates* each of the two members. Kimhi further adds (3) that the *positive* judgement has *priority* over its negation. And rightly so, because rejecting and correcting always presupposes something that is rejected or corrected. (We will find yet another reason later). He thus puts forward a complex of three well-justified theses:

- (1) Judgements come in contradictory pairs: p , $\sim p$.
- (2) The unity of the pair dominates the members.
- (3) The positive judgement, p , has priority over the negative judgement, $\sim p$.

In his article on Kimhi, Della Rocca identifies these three theses and two further characteristic theoretical measures Kimhi takes to meet the Parmenidean challenge, (4) the way Kimhi engages with *Frege*, and (5) the way he distinguishes between *categorematic* and *syncategorematic* expressions and contents.

Let's start with (4). Kimhi takes a two-sided stance towards Frege. *On the one hand*, he agrees with him that a thought or proposition is *repeatable* in various logical contexts: in affirmations, negations, withholdings, and so on.

On the other hand, Frege concluded that the *assertoric force* of a judgement must be *dissociated* from its *sense*, which he called its *thought* ("Gedanke"). Thoughts, Frege assumed, exist pre-linguistically in a realm of senses, somewhat like Platonic Forms, and we can *grasp* them, put them into linguistic form and then *assert* them in judgements. Grasping and asserting are two different things: we grasp contents or senses (thoughts) and assert them as true in judgements. That is what Frege says and what Kimhi (following Wittgenstein and others) denies.

Frege's dissociation of *sense* (forceless propositional content) and assertoric *force* fails for the following reason.

Senses supposedly exist in themselves, without internal relation to linguistic articulation by human speakers. But nothing real, existing in itself, can correspond to the linguistic sign for negation. So in the realm of senses, the contradictory pair that we express as p and $\sim p$ is a pair of two opposite combinations of a predicative sense P and a singular sense α : ' $P \Rightarrow \alpha$ ' and ' $P \Leftarrow \alpha$ ' (just to represent it figuratively by means of two oppositely directed arrows).

But this means that ' $P \Rightarrow \alpha$ ' and ' $P \Leftarrow \alpha$ ' (if they logically precede the assertion ' Pa ', i.e. are graspable independently of ' Pa ') are strictly indiscernible (i.e. indistinguishable from each other) and that it would be completely arbitrary which one we would express with Pa and which one with $\sim Pa$. There would simply be no fact of the matter. So it is even an understatement to say that the choice would be arbitrary, because in reality we could not choose at all, because we could not recognise and distinguish between two different options.

(This follows with the PSR, says Della Rocca. But we should add that in this particular case the relevance of the PSR can be shown independently. For if there is no sufficient reason to associate ‘ $P \Rightarrow \alpha$ ’ with ‘ Pa ’ instead of ‘ $\sim Pa$ ’ – or vice versa; and the same applies to ‘ $P \Leftarrow \alpha$ ’ – then we *cannot know* what we *mean* by ‘ Pa ’ or by ‘ $\sim Pa$ ’. So there would be nothing to mean here. Language is, after all, a human activity and a social art; it must therefore be learnable.)

To visualise this, we can think of an *imaginary world* consisting only of two opposing *iron arrows* that are qualitatively identical. (Max Black imagined a world of two qualitatively identical iron spheres, see his “The Identity of Indiscernibles”, in: *Mind*, 61, 1952, 153-164; we take iron arrows instead because they can be directed in opposite directions). The imaginary world thus looks like this: $\Rightarrow \Leftarrow$, with a global spatial symmetry point between the two arrowheads.

In that world, the “left” arrow points from “left” to “right”, the “right” arrow from “right” to “left”, *we would like to say in a fictitious view from the outside*. The problem is that with the resources of the two-arrow world, left and right are *not definable*, unless according to the joking pseudo-explanation: Right is where the thumb is on the left.

This is how it is with contradictorily opposed predications in the realm of senses: the positive one is the one that the negative one contradicts (and vice versa). So nobody, not even an omniscient being, can know which force belongs to which sense, because nothing is determined here; there is no fact of the matter.

Frege cannot, therefore, in principle answer Kimhi’s question *in virtue of what* the thought Pa is associated with the positive and the thought $\sim Pa$ with the negative predication. Consequently, what Frege calls *thoughts*, forceless propositional senses, do not exist. As already the early Wittgenstein claimed against Frege, the assertoric force is inseparable from propositions. After all, propositions are *truth claims*, i.e. assertions.

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But then we, Wittgenstein, Kimhi et al., have to solve a *puzzle*. If a proposition, p , qua forceful truth claim is repeated in its own negation, $\sim p$, then how can $\sim p$ consistently contradict its forceful constituent, the truth claim p ? For Frege and many who follow him, this puzzle is unsolvable, and so they say that p cannot have assertoric force in $\sim p$. But we saw that this is not true, because p cannot be dissociated from its assertoric force.

Kimhi is highly to be praised for offering an ingenious, if somewhat counterintuitive, *solution* to the puzzle (but intuitions don’t count in philosophy anyway; they’re unreliable):

The truth-claim p occurs in the negation $\sim p$, Kimhi says, as *displayed* by an *assertoric gesture*. Thus the negative act, $\sim p$, “is based on the positive gesture”, p (p. 61). (This is the further reason announced above why p has priority over $\sim p$).

Assertions are *displayed* by propositional signs, i.e. sentences. We say p and, by displaying the sign design ‘ p ’, we mean exactly that: p . In this respect, our displaying p is, as Kimhi says, “self-identifying”, not a mere gesturing: we mean p . But complex assertions, such $\sim p$, can include *assertoric gestures*. We say $\sim p$ and do not mean p , but only perform the gesture p (including its assertoric force) while saying $\sim p$. Kimhi explains (p. 56):

I term any display of an assertion that is also an instance of an assertion *self-identifying*. [We say p and mean exactly that: p .] Any display that is not self-identifying I call an *assertoric gesture*. An assertoric gesture is analogous to a *mimetic* gesture that displays an act without being it [...]. A mimetic gesture can be performed as a basis for another act, as when we threaten someone by tracing a finger slowly across our neck. Similarly, an assertoric gesture occurs as a basis for the display of another repeatable, for example, p in $\sim p$.

Assertoric gestures belong to a special kind of metalanguage, not a normal, descriptive metalanguage, but an *illustrative metalanguage*: the proposition to be spoken about is gesturally presented, *shown*, by means of its linguistic sign design. I follow Wilfrid Sellars in using *dot quotes* rather than normal inverted commas for this type of mention, e.g. •Theaetetus sits•.

The *relevant result* of these considerations for us is that the negation of a predication can and must now be analysed as an *implicitly meta-linguistic* or *meta-conceptual* statement:

$$\sim p \leftrightarrow_{df} \sim(\bullet p \bullet),$$

where the dot quotes indicate the gestural character of what is included within them, here p .

Two interesting and important *lessons* can be learnt from this. *Firstly*, only positive predications are object-language *in the strictest sense*, i.e. strictly about the world. *Secondly*, extensional (truth-functional) and intensional (non-truth-functional) statements can now be treated equally in the analysis:

$$\begin{array}{ll} \text{A believes that } p & \leftrightarrow_{df} \text{A believes } (\bullet p \bullet). \\ p \ \& \ q & \leftrightarrow_{df} (\bullet p \bullet) \ \& \ (\bullet q \bullet). \end{array}$$

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Finally, let us consider point (5), i.e. how Kimhi distinguishes between *categorematic* and *syncategorematic determinations* (expressions and contents).

Categorematic determinations are specified by *singular* or *general terms* (names or predicates). Every term that can occur within a basic, positive predication – names and verbs – is *categorematic*.

Syncategorematic determinations are specified either by whole *sentences*, such as predications, or by logical *particles* that operate on sentences.

Examples: “Theaetetus”, “sits” and “Theaetetus” are *categorematic*.
“Theaetetus sits”, “not (...)”, “Plato believes that (...)” are *syncategorematic*.

I myself am *sceptical* about the *relevance* of Kimhi’s distinction between *categorematic* and *syncategorematic determinations*. It seems unbelievable to me that the name ‘Plato’ loses its *categorematic* status when you add to ‘Plato sits’: ‘... and thinks that Socrates is wise’, thus: ‘Plato sits and thinks that Socrates is wise’.

Well, Kimhi could say that the name ‘Plato’ has a double status here: it is *categorematic* as subject to the predicate ‘sits’ and *syncategorematic* as part of the operator ‘Plato thinks that (...)’. But I believe that also in ‘Plato believes that (...)’ the name ‘Plato’ occurs *categorematically*, as a sentence subject, or at least *also* *categorematically* (and in another view as part of an operator).

Therefore I prefer a related but markedly different distinction: between strict *object language* (OL) and (implicit, covert) *metalanguage* (ML).

Examples: “Theaetetus sits” is OL, and so are its components “Theaetetus” and “sits”.
“Plato believes that Theaetetus sits” is ML, and so is “ $\sim p$ ”.

But of course terms can do double service in a sentence and be OL *within* an assertoric gesture and ML *as* gesture.

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Let us conclude this lecture with a brief exposition of the three theses mentioned above that go beyond Kimhi’s position.

(i) Thesis of the extended consciousness. Our sensory consciousness is something that we share (in a certain sense) with sentient animals. Its contents are known as *qualia*. For us humans, there are visual, auditory, olfactory, gustatory and tactile qualia. Other species may have sensory access to other qualia (e.g. bats).

Later, in the fifth lecture, it is shown that everything that can be referred to by indexicals such as ‘this’, ‘there’, ‘here’ etc. cannot be in the head, at least not in normal cases, but must be *in public space*. Since qualia can be referred to by indexicals in thought and speech, they are not in the head either. However, since qualia form the content of our sensory consciousness, our *consciousness is also not in the head*, but in public space. In other words, space is our common, shared field of consciousness in which we all literally overlap, even with sentient animals.

It is on this basis of spatially (and temporally) extended consciousness that *thinking* arises in *sapient* animals, i.e. in humans. Due to the common sensory basis, thinking can then reach all the way to things in public space. How it does is explained by:

(ii) the thesis of the readability of things. This thesis states that animals that have learnt to talk about things have thereby been enabled to read things as *tokens of predications* about them. The predication “Theaetetus sits” has many tokens; one has just been written down. But in addition to the many verbal tokens, there is also a token of this sentence out in the world, namely the seated Theaetetus himself. Anyone who sees him sitting reads him in their mind as a token of •Theaetetus sits•.

(iii) The thesis of the antinomy of negation. If thinking gets its content from that to which it reaches all the way, then it seems impossible to think something negative, because in space and time (our field of consciousness) there is always only being. But *Heidegger*, for example, argues that we can experience *nothingness* (“das Nichts”, *the Nothing*) in the fundamental holistic mood (“Grundstimmung”) of anxiety (not fear, i.e. fear that *p*) a thesis that is probably also held in classical *Chinese* and *Indian* philosophy.

One other way of experiencing nothingness is to be confronted with the negation-of-itself, as it surfaces in the so-called *liar sentences*: “What you are currently reading is not true”. This is not only a self-contradiction, but more specifically an *antinomy*, because we cannot effectively negate it. It negates itself, and when we negate it, we agree with it. This is why the self-contradiction of the Liar is incurable: an antinomy, and more specifically the *antinomy of negation*.

Every operation, including negation, can be applied to itself in thought, and the result of this self-application can then be critically evaluated. For example: Apply the operation of set formation to itself and consider the unit set of itself: $\Omega = \{ \Omega \} = \{ \{ \Omega \} \} = \dots = \{ \{ \{ \dots \} \} \}$. Does Ω exist? Most set theorists say: no (standard set theory). But a minority say: yes (non-well-founded set theory).

Negation in self-application: $v \leftrightarrow \sim(v) \leftrightarrow \sim(\sim(v)) \leftrightarrow \dots \leftrightarrow \sim(\sim(\sim(\dots)))$, is true if and only if it is not true. It is thus *antinomic* and can be understood as an expression of our experience of *nothingness*. Thinking as such turns antinomic in the limit. This is the *antinomy thesis* (of hermeneutic realism).

Because we can experience nothingness, we understand negation, and because we understand negation, we understand that there is difference, multiplicity and becoming. In this way, the phenomena can be saved from the Parmenidean verdict that only being can be thought.

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4. **What should we say about truth today?** (Mon, 29.04.2024, 14:10–16:10)

In this lecture I will develop the thesis that truth has three essential aspects, a realist or objective aspect (*correspondence* of thinking and being), a phenomenal or epistemic aspect (*unconcealment* of being in perception) and a pragmatic or normative aspect (warranted *assertibility*). These aspects recur in modified forms in many other philosophically relevant issues, e.g. as the modes of time: past, present and future, and as the dimensions of space: width, height and length, etc. A book of mine could be helpful for preparation: *Truth, Time and Freedom. Introduction into a Philosophical Theory*, translated into Chinese by Chen Yong and Liang Yibin, Beijing 2016, Chapters I, IV, V and IX.

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Is there a topic that concerns all sciences, but is only made an actual topic in philosophy? All sciences make claims to truth, but only philosophy systematically poses the famous question that the Roman procurator Pilate asked the Jewish defendant Jesus: ***What is truth?***

Of course, the general topic of ***being*** also concerns all sciences and all people, because they all have to do with being. But ***firstly***, being is a somewhat unwieldy, not straightforward colloquial expression, unlike truth. And ***secondly***, when we ask about truth as such, we are automatically led to being. We do not lose it. For being is first and foremost veridical (or veritative) being: being in the sense of *being true*, as we could already see in Aristotle (Met. Θ 10).

The nice thing is that if we enquire systematically about truth, we can firstly start very specifically with our linguistic truth claims and secondly be led step by step to all philosophical topics. We won't miss any if we are careful. Moreover, we will find the ***threefold internal structure*** of truth, its realist, pragmatic and presentational aspect, almost everywhere in the various philosophical fields, in logic (thinking and being), in ontology (being), in the philosophy of space and time, in the philosophy of mind, in practical philosophy (freedom), in ethics (happiness), etc.

So let's start with the Pilate question and the fact that we all constantly make claims to truth, a fact that cannot be disputed without self-contradiction (to dispute something is to make a truth claim after all) and is in so far immune to scepticism.

The ***method of philosophy*** – at least one very effective method – will then be to ask about the general ***presuppositions*** that we all must tacitly make when we participate in the practice of truth claims. The more far-reaching and ambitious question will then be whether these presuppositions are justified, i.e. whether they are themselves true.

This is a kind of ***logical archaeology***: we look at the fact of truth claims and dig deeper and deeper into its cellar for its logical foundations. If we are lucky, we will find reasons that justify the practice of truth claims. And if we are even luckier, we will come across the logical foundations of the entire city (or entire cosmos) in whose centre the palace of truth stands.

Other philosophers may start digging under the Palace of Freedom or the Palace of Happiness or the Palace of Logical Reasoning. But I would wager that their progress will be slower than ours and that they will probably get stuck at their digging site.

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In our somewhat awkward talk of claims to truth lies the possibility of failure: claims can be unjustified and must be justified on demand. This already points to a ***normative or pragmatic aspect*** of truth. But why is this so, where does this pragmatic aspect come from? Why don't we simply realise what is true and the case, full stop? We often do, in everyday life, when

nobody asks us to justify our trivial perceptions. Then we are simply in the truth, and that is its *epistemic or presentational or phenomenal aspect*. But in principle, even then someone could ask us for reasons. Why – in virtue of what – is that so?

The answer lies in the *realist or objective aspect* of truth, namely in the fact that we claim that something is objectively true regardless of the fact that we claim it. Here we already find one of the *general assumptions* that we tacitly make by raising truth claims: We presuppose that what is true and real is independent of our respective beliefs. *Our beliefs do not make themselves true*. This truism expresses the realist aspect of truth, and it has epistemological consequences: We are fallible in principle; the possibility of error has been provided for in all our judgements.

Now, *Heidegger* famously diagnoses a *change in the nature of truth* (“Wandel im Wesen der Wahrheit”) that took place along the way from Parmenides and Heraclitus to Plato and Aristotle. According to Heidegger, it is not that Plato decided to think differently about truth than Parmenides did, but rather that truth itself “decided” to give itself a different appearance for the thinking of mortals. Plato merely complied with this.

Whatever the case may be, in Plato’s work *presentational* thinking took a back seat in favour of *representational* thinking. The epistemic, *presentational aspect of truth* faded into the background in favour of the *realist aspect*. In thinking (i.e. thoughtful) perception we are no longer simply *in* the truth, but we are now confronted with the *sophists* who want to make us doubt our firmest convictions with their confusing discourse.

Aristotle follows suit. We saw that at the beginning of Met. Θ 10 he emphasises the realist aspect of (propositional, predicative) truth: “It is not because we truthfully think that you are pale that you are pale, but because you are pale that we think truthfully when we say this.” (1051b6–9) – He thus prepared the ground for the *gigantomachy about the nature of truth* that was waged in analytic philosophy in the late 20th century between strict realism (the early Putnam, Thomas Nagel) on the one hand and pragmatist anti-realism (Michael Dummett) on the other. The later Putnam and many others (Quine, Sellars, Davidson, ...) attempted to take intermediate positions.

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The *basic error* in the competing extreme positions is that they each identify (or confuse) truth with one of its three aspects. This also applies to Parmenides, who equated truth with its presentational aspect:

- | | |
|--------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Strict monism: | truth = unconcealment (i.e. the presentational aspect of truth)
consequence: distinction, multiplicity, becoming are illusory. |
| Strict realism: | truth = correspondence (i.e. the realist aspect of truth)
(“There can be ineffable facts” – beyond human thought and speech)
consequence: an epistemic scepticism that leads to semantic nihilism |
| Strict pragmatism: | truth = assertibility (i.e. the pragmatic aspect of truth)
consequence: anti-realism, abandonment of the PEM
(principle of excluded middle) and thus of (classical) logic.
Plus (as Putnam critically says): “Truth can get lost.” |

There are many theories of truth. Most of them are half-hearted *hybrids*, and in the end they can usually be categorised in one of the three boxes. *Consensus theories* teach that truth is what can be agreed upon in a free and fair discussion (Habermas: in a discourse free of domination). The pragmatic aspect takes centre stage. The same applies to *coherence theories*: a belief is true if it is logically coherent with other beliefs in our web of belief. Then it is up to us and our activities as to what is true and what is not.

After “the change in the nature of truth” with Plato, strict monism was no longer an issue (only Della Rocca revived it, but not as a theory of truth). The gigantomachy about truth and logic was therefore between realism and pragmatism. And since neither side could win (each could show that the other had absurd consequences), many theorists said: truth is not an interesting philosophical topic. They have proposed so-called *deflationary theories* of truth (“truth has no nature”) or *redundancy* theories of truth or (Robert Brandom) *prosentential theories* of truth.

But this is all theoretical *defeatism and escapism*. Because they don’t know how to decide and end the gigantomachy, they say: “Never mind, truth is not an issue anyway.” – We need the *substantive concept of truth* in order to understand and say what we do and what happens to us when we perceive and judge: We are then in truth and/or raise claims to truth.

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The realist aspect of truth (pointed to by Aristotle) has an immediate consequence for epistemology: *fallibilism*. If reality is objective, i.e. independent of our particular judgements about it, then there is no general guarantee that our judgements are true. Rather, we must do something to ensure truth, we must justify our judgements (which points to the pragmatic aspect).

Fallibilism, in turn, has a consequence for *logic*, as Plato showed when he demonstrated that error and deception presuppose the synthetic name-verb structure of *predication*. Aristotle emphasised this structure when he identified judgement (predicative synthesis) as the *locus of truth and falsity*, i.e. *bivalence*. This, by the way, brings us back from logic to the *theory of truth*. In philosophy, we see, everything hangs together with everything and there can be no division of labour, on pain of theoretical shipwreck.

And we see: The *internal bipartite nature* of judgement (subject-predicate) is mirrored in the “*external*” *bivalence* (true-false). (But bivalence is external only if seen syntactically, not logically and semantically).

One of the general presuppositions of the fact that we raise truth claims is thus the bipartite structure of truth claims: in them we *refer* to something by means of a name (or other singular term) and *characterise* it by means of a verb (or predicate). In our *logical archaeology* we must therefore also ask what general presuppositions we must make when we refer to something, and what presuppositions we must make when we characterise something.

We will deal with the first question in the next lecture. The answer to the second question is, roughly speaking, that we characterise things by *reading* them as tokens of predications about them (this was mentioned briefly last time). Today we want to stick to the topic of *truth itself*.

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If you equate truth with one of its aspects and then shy away from the absurd consequences of the equation, you end up with a hybrid theory of truth that has not been thought through to the end. What happens if you equate truth with its *presentational aspect* but do not want to accept strict monism? Then you end up with the *myth of the given* (Sellars’s expression).

The *myth of the given* assumes that there are cases of immediate knowledge that justify our other knowledge without themselves being able or needing to be justified. This position is also known as *epistemological foundationalism*. Bertrand Russell advocated it by distinguishing between our knowledge by description and our *knowledge by acquaintance*.

Knowledge by acquaintance we can have of so-called *sense data*, that is the (empiricist) normal form of the myth of the given. But Russell was extremely liberal and also allowed knowledge by acquaintance of many other things: universals, mathematical entities, logical contents etc.

Aristotle too distinguished several, namely two kinds of simple or asynthetic objects/facts that we can know directly by ‘touching’ them in thought (*thinganein, thigein*): sensible and intelligible *asyntheta* (we talked about it).

They are **hybrids of objects and facts**. Their mere existence is their truth or their being the case. No error or falsity is possible about them, only ignorance. They are ‘monovalently’ true whenever they appear. We cannot deceive ourselves about them when they fill our cognition and cannot distinguish between ourselves as subjects and them as objects. They are beyond the duality of subject and object. – They are truly mythological entities like fairies and elves.

But it was nevertheless important that Aristotle spoke of them and took them seriously. Because they remind us of something important and right. They are the unattainable borderline case in the line of flight of our naive perception and thinking, in which we do not yet care about possible justification. **They mark the presentational aspect of truth.**

They, or the sensible ones among them, may be characteristic of **animal consciousness**. But thinking breaks them down into the **dualities** of (i) logical subject and predicate, (ii) true and false, (iii) cognising subject and cognised object. Through this breaking up, the realist and pragmatic aspects of truth can come into contact with them, which then makes a truly integrative theory of truth possible.

The **unity of time** in its three modes can serve as a model for the **unity of truth** in its three aspects. Conversely, we understand the content of the modes (and can distinguish between them) from the three aspects of truth: the present from the presentational aspect, the future from the pragmatic aspect and the past from the realist aspect of truth. **The philosophy of time** too is thus essentially connected with the theory of truth.

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When talking about the truth, one should not be completely silent about so-called **dialetheism** (Graham Priest). This is the position that there are true contradictions, so-called dialetheias.

Of course, dialetheias are not only true, but also false. Graham Priest accepts them and also interprets Hegel and Heidegger as dialetheists (I have my doubts about this). If I ever were to become a dialetheist myself, it would be because of the **antinomy of negation** (which I mentioned briefly last time).

Liar sentences (‘What you are reading or hearing now is not true’) make sense: we understand them. But if they are true, they are false, and if they are false, they are true. They are the natural candidates for dialetheias: it seems both to be true (and also false), that liar sentences are true and that they are false.

Liar sentences are linguistic expressions of **self-negation** (or absolute negation or nothingness). They mark the fact that our predicative, discursive thinking rests on presuppositions that it cannot catch up with itself. They mark the **blind spot** of discursive thinking, where it is connected to that which underlies it and which it cannot catch up with. A blind spot is a **singularity**. It is where our language fails. In my opinion, talking about a dialetheia here is just helplessly gesticulating in a dark direction.

I myself don’t know how I should theoretically relate to self-negation. And that’s a good thing. Theorising must suffer shipwreck at the blind spot. Here we find ourselves in a language predicament (language emergency, language need, “Sprachnot”) that points us to something important that we cannot state discursively, but can only experience in terms of mood (“Stimmung”), if Heidegger is right. He calls this our **basic mood of anxiety**.

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5. Reference to objects in space and time (Tue, 30.04.2024, 16–18)

In this lecture, starting from the fact that we raise claims to objective truth in our judgements, statements, perceptions and beliefs, we will examine the presuppositions that we must make and that must be fulfilled in order to be able to refer to particulars (individual things) in space and time. This requires a system of indexical thought contents and expressions (such as “here”, “there”, “now”, “yesterday”, etc.). Anyone wishing to prepare themselves can read P.F. Strawson, *Individuals. An Essay in Descriptive Metaphysics*, London 1959, chapter 1: “Bodies”, and chapter 4: “Monads”, also chapter III of my (Chinese) book on truth, time and freedom (see lecture 4).

a) Objects and predications

Objects are beings or entities in their capacity to be possible objects of reference (in thought and speech) for thinking and speaking **subjects** (paradigmatically: humans).

Attention: **Thinking subject** (judging, speaking, acting, ... subject) vs. **logical subject**.

The **veridical** being (being true, being the case, obtaining of a fact) expressed in a predication (“Theaetetus sits”) is transformed into **existential** being (in short: **existence**) and credited to the object named (=logical subject, here: Theaetetus) through the bipartite predicative structure: If “Theaetetus sits” is true, Theaetetus must **exist** and – through his sitting – be the so-called **truth-maker** of the statement that he sits.

In the predication “Theaetetus sits”, the name “Theaetetus” is determined in such and such a way (viz. by being flanked with “sits” on the right-hand side), and the predication is true, if the name bearer, Theaetetus, is determined **accordingly** (viz. if he is sitting). What does “accordingly” mean here? According to the conventions that constitute the language in question, here English.

Logical picturing (making pictures in words): flanking names with predicates. In principle, you could also simply write (or pronounce) the names in different styles:

“*Theaetetus*” (italicised) for “Theaetetus sits”
 “**Theaetetus**” (bold print) for “Theaetetus sings”
 “THEAETETUS” (small capitals) for “Theaetetus smiles”
 ... (etc.)

But that would be very cumbersome and in fact technically impossible, because we wouldn't have enough different writing and speaking styles. That's why we use predicates. As far as logical picturing or logical mapping is concerned, predicates are merely **auxiliary devices** for determining names (and other singular terms). (That is one main idea of Wilfrid Sellars's picture theory of predicative sentences.)

In principle, you could even combine various styles into one:

“***Theaetetus***” (italicised and bold): this can be read as a token of **two** predications!

Maps are read in that way, and according to the **thesis of the readability of things**, this can be transferred to the things mapped by simple analogy: One Thing can be read as a token of many predications about it.

(As far as I know, this readability thesis has so far only been put forward by me in print. But I hope that I am not the only one who thinks it is correct).

b) Categories of objects

There are *abstract* objects and *concrete* objects (for possible reference).

For abstract objects, *qualitative* identity includes *numerical* identity.

For concrete objects, the concept of qualitative identity is weaker than the concept of numerical identity.

Qualities are *general* properties (conceivable through general concepts) including *relational* properties: being red, being green, being round, being square, lying on a table, standing next to a tree, ... (etc.).

Abstract qualities, e.g. of *numbers*, are being even, being prime, being a natural number, being a rational number, being a real number, being the successor of a prime number, ... (etc.)

If x is a number and y is a number and x and y share all qualities, then $x=y$.

If x is a concrete object and y is a concrete object and x and y share all qualities, it is still an open question, whether $x=y$. Qualitative identity does not logically guarantee numerical identity.

The *space-time system* is the sphere (and a necessary condition) of concrete objects. Concrete objects are also called *particulars* (e.g. by P.F. Strawson in: *Individuals*, London 1959). Particulars occur in space and time.

The *basic particulars* are things and persons. Starting from them, non-basic particulars can be conceived. From Socrates who dies, we can form the *event* of Socrates' death. A chain of many events can be called a *process*, such as a thunderstorm or a journey or a war, and so on.

Of course, one can also regard *space-time regions* themselves as – how shall we put it – abstract (?) particulars (abstract, because abstraction is made from what is located in the regions in question). It is also (and especially) true for space-time regions that their qualitative identity does not guarantee their numerical identity. In this respect, they should therefore be called concrete rather than abstract. But these labels are not the point. In the following, we will deal with objects for which qualitative identity does not guarantee numerical identity: things and persons, events and processes, space-time regions. Let us group them together as *particulars*.

The basic particulars (things including persons) are the *prototypical logical subjects* of our predications. Following their pattern, we introduce non-basic particulars (events, regions) and then also abstract objects. In the following, we will therefore mainly deal with basic particulars (plus space-time regions).

c) Empirical presuppositions of singular reference

P.F. Strawson pointed out that singular reference to (basic) particulars rests on empirical *presuppositions*. We need to know which object among all objects in the world we mean when we refer to it in order to predicate something of it.

In the referring terms we use, therefore, empirical knowledge is *encoded*. When we say: “The present king of England is diseased”, the referring term “the present king of England” encodes that there is a country called England that can be found on a world map, and that this country currently has one and only one king.

But what about the sentence: “The present king of Germany is diseased”? There is no present king of Germany; yet we understand the sentence. But thinking, we know, reaches all the way to what is the case. How can we understand a sentence that refers to nothing?

Bertrand Russell in his *theory of definite descriptions* analyses the sentence as follows: “There is an x and x is a present king of Germany and every y that is a present king of Ger-

many is identical with x, and x is diseased". According to this analysis, the sentence "The present king of Germany is diseased" expresses a statement that is false.

Strawson disagrees. According to his analysis, the sentence about the present German king makes a *presupposition* that is not true. Therefore, we understand the sentence merely linguistically, but it does not make a statement. Statements are true or false; this sentence makes no statement and is therefore a merely linguistic construct and neither true nor false.

Strawson disagrees, because Russell pays *too high a price* with his analysis: In the example sentences, according to Russell, no singular reference takes place at all, but only general statements are made ('There is an x ...'). In fact, according to Russell, there is singular reference – in the last analysis – only by means of the *logical proper name* (he calls it that) "this", namely to sense data. In fact, however, "this" is not a name at all (names have a fixed reference), but a so-called *indexical* (a demonstrative) whose reference varies from occasion of use to occasion of use.

The reference of indexicals such as "this", "here", "now", "I", "over there", "yesterday", "you" varies with the place (the person) and the time of use. They are therefore sometimes labelled as *token-reflexive*: A token of an indexical explicitly refers to something by also implicitly and reflexively referring to the situation in which it is uttered.

Because of this reflexive character, they are also termed *egocentric*. They form an informal *coordinate system* that can be used to refer to anything in the *spatiotemporal universe* (!), a coordinate system whose defining real *frame of reference* is the person speaking. By means of her or his body, a person defines the zero point (origin) of the coordinate system and the number and orientation of its 3+1 spatiotemporal axes, as well as the original units of measurement.

Spatial *origin*: e.g. behind the person's forehead where the incoming light rays would converge. Temporal *origin*: the moment of perception.

Axes and *orientations*: up/down, left/right, back/front; memory/expectation.

Units of measurement: spans or feet; heartbeats.

d. A priori presuppositions of singular reference

According to Strawson's analysis, our understanding of a predication is based on empirical presuppositions, i.e. ultimately on further predications. That looks like an *infinite regress*. But empirical presuppositions must come to an end on pain of vicious regress or vicious circularity. Strawson does not address this problem.

Again, nowhere in the published literature do I find anyone tackling the problem, apart from my own humble attempts. And again, I hope I'm not the only one thinking about the problem and suggesting solutions, albeit only in private discussion.

The solution I propose says that, in addition to the particular empirical presuppositions of reference, there are also very general *a priori presuppositions* that we all make by understanding and using indexicals.

A person must *know a priori* that she herself ("persona" has the female gender in the original Latin) is the defining corporeal (vs. Cartesianism!) *frame of reference* for her egocentric indexical coordinate system. She must therefore know something about her body a priori:

(i) Among all objects in the universe, her body is the only one that she can perceive both in *external perception* and in *internal affectivity* (pleasure or pain). On this *a priori basis*, she can find out empirically how far her body extends in space: as far as it hurts (or feels good).

(ii) She must be able to distinguish a priori between space and time, i.e. she must know that the time line is nomologically determined (according to causal laws of nature, which she must find out empirically), but that space is not. She can move freely back and forth in space, but not in time. Time flows evenly without her intervention.

(iii) She must a priori have the conceptual resources to distinguish three modes of time. These resources are provided by her a priori understanding of the concept of truth with its three essential aspects.

(iv) She must know a priori that space has three dimensions. This knowledge is provided by logic: Discourse has three a priori proto-dimensions: Individuals fall under general concepts, judgements are right (true) or wrong (false, "left"), inferences lead forward from premises to conclusions. Again, the three essential aspects of truth (and the modes of time) are helpfully in the background: concepts are underpinned by the presentational aspect (present), judgements by the realist aspect (past), inferences by the pragmatic aspect (future).

(v) She must know a priori how to define empirically basic units of measurement for space (she takes her span, her feet, etc) and for time (she takes the small moment of the extended present, which can be determined more precisely empirically).

This theory of the a priori presuppositions of reference can and must be spelt out further. But for now, this rough sketch will have to suffice.

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6. **The ontic individuation of things** (Mon, 06.05.2024, 14:10–16:10)

Lecture 5 was about epistemic individuation, i.e. about our singling out individual things in thought and in speech for singular reference. Lecture 6 will be about ontic individuation, i.e. about the question of what makes individual things the individual things that they are. The answer will be that all individual things are ontically individuated because some of them, persons, epistemically individuate themselves a priori. This leads to the following *subjectivity thesis*: Firstly, every possible space-time system includes some thinking subjects, and secondly, thinking subjects are necessarily corporeal beings (i.e. persons). Thomas Hofweber has critically discussed the subjectivity thesis in his latest book *Idealism and the Harmony of Thought and Reality*, Oxford UP 2023, sections 2.3, 2.4 (pp. 38–49). I have argued for the subjectivity thesis in Koch, “The Subjectivity Thesis and Its Corollaries”, in: *Philosophical Inquiry. International Quarterly* 28 (2006), 9–20, and in chapter VIII of my (Chinese) book (see lecture 4).

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Last time we talked about *epistemic individuation*: How do we pick out things for singular reference from the quadrillions of things in the universe? Today we will talk about *ontic individuation*: Since there is “no entity without identity” (Quine’s slogan), we can ask: In virtue of what is an individual thing the individual thing that it is, identical only with itself and different from all other things?

Arthur Schopenhauer (1788–1860), by the way, a philosopher who tried to combine Kant’s philosophy with Indian philosophy (the sacred scriptures of Hindu traditions, especially the Upanishads) declared space and time to be the “*principium individuationis*” (principle of individuation). He lamented individuation as a painful illusion, a mere appearance (“veil of Maya”), and declared the anonymous, impersonal universal will to be the thing in itself.

But we will see that space and time, although they are indeed *necessary conditions of individuation* (as we saw last time), are not the *principle of individuation*. For the positions in space and time in turn require an even more fundamental principle of individuation.

We have seen that in addition to general concepts or general terms (‘tree’, ‘green’, etc.), *indexicals* are also necessary for epistemic individuation (‘this’, ‘here’, etc.): “This green tree here (is an oak.)”. We use indexicals to think and describe *perspectival properties* of things, and we can only do this because we first individuate ourselves a priori as embodied subjects and localise ourselves a priori in space and time. This *original a priori self-individuation and self-localisation* is the origin of the fact that the perceptible properties of things are perspectival.

Today we will see that the perspectival properties of things (and thus embodied subjects) are *also necessary for ontic individuation*. From this follows a so-called **subjectivity thesis**:

(ST) There can be no individual things, nor individual space-time positions, i.e. no spatiotemporal universe, if embodied thinking subjects do not exist at some point and somewhere in it.

However, the subjectivity thesis also includes its conversion:

(ST*) There can be no thinking subjectivity that can refer to individuals if it is not embodied in space and time.

To *prove* the ST, we will consider in turn different kinds of *general predicative determinations* – in short: *properties* – of things:

- (a) properties that are *purely* general and *non-relational* (being red, being round, ...)
- (b) properties that are *purely* general and *relational* (lying on a table, ...),
- (c) object-dependent properties in the broad sense, i.e.:
 - (c1) object-dependent properties in the narrow sense (walking on the moon, ...),
 - (c2) positional properties (being born in 2002 AD, crossing the equator, ...),
 - (c3) perspectival properties (being past, standing here, ...).

Things have properties of all these types. We will see that this is *no coincidence* and that they must have *perspectival properties* in particular in order to be ontically individuated. Purely general properties and (narrowly) object-dependent and positional properties are not sufficient for this. The *subjectivity thesis* then follows from this.

We will use two obvious principles as starting points of our argument and as our core premises:

- (1) *the principle of the identity of indiscernibles (PII)*,
- (2) *the truism that general determinations are general*, i.e. that they do not individuate.

Let us call (2) *the principle of generality (PG)* for short. It will turn out that these two principles are not easy to combine. But since both are trivially true, we must find a way to harmonise them.

Excursus. It should be noted that PII must be understood in a slightly non-trivial sense for the argument to work, namely on the basis of the fundamental thesis that ontic individuation cannot be a *brute fact*. The reason for this is not a mere application of the general logico-ontological *principle of sufficient reason* (PSR), which is upheld by rationalists such as Michael Della Rocca and which empiricists are more or less sceptical about.

According to the PSR, there are no brute facts, i.e. everything that is the case is the case *in virtue of* a reason or a ground why it is rather the case than not. For *rationalists*, then, it is self-evident that there must be a principle of ontic individuation, and for them my argument in favour of the subjectivity thesis should be obvious and convincing. To *sceptics*, however, I owe a word about why ontic individuation belongs to a special class of facts that cannot be brute facts, even though there may be many brute facts in general. So here goes.

In our sensory consciousness we are confronted with *qualia*. With the onset of thinking (ontogenetically in our earliest childhood), we begin to experience our environment in terms of the **predicative duality** of subject and predicate, i.e. of individual things and their general predicative determinations.

Thinkers thus experience qualia as the fundamental general predicative qualities of things. But how could their thinking have grasped *the idea of an individual thing* that is the logical subject of many qualitative determinations? Empirically, not at all, as Hume famously showed.

What is empirically the case may be the case without reason (i.e. as a brute fact); but there must be a reason for our competence to speak and think about whatever we are factually speaking about. For we had to *learn language*; it does not fall from the sky as a brute fact like snow or rain. The factual occurrence of qualia may be reason enough for us to be able to speak about qualia (if we want to accommodate the empiricists here). But how have we learnt to talk about individual things as bearers of general qualities and how have we learnt to *count* if individuality as such is nowhere empirically given?

The theory of the a priori presuppositions of reference points to the *a priori self-individuation of thinking subjects* as the starting point for all *epistemic* individuation. Now we ask about the principle of *ontic* individuation, and in the end, we will see that the source for this must also lie in the self-individuation of thinking subjects.

Let us first take a look at the PII. It states:

(PII) If x and y share all their general predicative determinations, then $x = y$.

PII is a theorem of second order predicate logic that can be formalised as follows:

$$(\forall f)(fx \leftrightarrow fy) \rightarrow x=y$$

Just to remind you:

- (a) Propositional logic: ‘ \sim ’ ‘ \wedge ’ ‘ \vee ’ ‘ \rightarrow ’ ‘ \leftrightarrow ’ and sentence letters: ‘ p ’, ‘ q ’, ‘ r ’, ...
- (b) First-order predicate logic: ‘ \forall ’, ‘ \exists ’, individual variables: ‘ x ’, ‘ y ’, ‘ z ’, ..., letters for names (individual constants): ‘ a ’, ‘ b ’, ‘ c ’, ..., and predicate letters: ‘ F ’, ‘ G ’, ‘ H ’, ..., are added.
- (c) Second-order predicate logic: Predicate variables: ‘ f ’, ‘ g ’, ‘ h ’, ..., are added.

Since there is *no complete proof procedure for second-order logic*, one can doubt its status as logic proper. Quine says that it looks like logic, but is actually already mathematics: “set theory in sheep’s clothing”. But even then, its (necessary) truth must not be doubted. So we must find a meaning or an interpretation of the PII that makes it true (that makes it a logical-mathematical truth).

The PII and its converse, the principle of the *indiscernibility of the identical*, which has even more the status of a truism, can even be used to *define* identity. This is done by means of the so-called *Leibniz-Russell definition* of identity:

$$\text{Leibniz-Russell definition: } x=y \leftrightarrow_{\text{df}} (\forall f)(fx \leftrightarrow fy)$$

Now, there are some people who doubt the PII, and Max Black has given them a voice with his *two-sphere world*. In Black’s article, a proponent of the PII debates with a critic, and the imaginary two-sphere world is intended to serve as a counter-example to the PII.

But of course, the proponent can reply that the PII shows that the imaginary two-sphere world is *logically impossible*. For, how does the critic think he knows which *imaginary* worlds are also (logically) *possible*? The actual world is possible and presumably some others, but we don’t know exactly which ones.

After all, philosophy and mathematics are sciences of the (logically or mathematically) *necessary* and therefore also (*ex negativo*) of the *impossible*, not of the *possible*. Or let us say more cautiously: not of possible worlds, but at most (also) of narrowly circumscribed, local possibilities.

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The real issue with the PII is, or at least should be, the question of the *range of the predicate variable ‘ f ’*. In general, to start with: This variable ranges over *predicates* of things or takes as values what predicates (general terms) are meant to stand for: *general predicative determinations* (GPDs) of things. Let’s call GPDs *properties* for short. (The technical terminology is free here, you have to choose for yourself).

Consider the relevant relationship between *being*, *thinking* and *speaking*: Things have *properties*. We conceive of properties through *concepts*. We express concepts with *verbs* (predicates, general terms).

Now to *our question*: What *kinds* of properties must we admit as values of ‘f’ for the PII to be true? To put it colloquially: What kinds of properties must x and y have in common so that it is logically guaranteed that x is identical to y?

First proposal (Leibniz): The intrinsic, i.e. non-relational properties of things, such as being red, being green, being round, being angular, are sufficient. (They are expressed linguistically by one-place predicates.)

But that is *implausible*, to say the least. We can easily imagine worlds, not as simple as Max Black’s, but at least as rich as the actual world, that are *counterexamples* to Leibniz’s proposal. Let us simply imagine that our world history is only one epoch in an eternal recurrence of the same (the qualitatively identical). Then every epoch (and every object in every epoch) has an infinite number of qualitatively identical but numerically different duplicates, contrary to Leibniz’s proposal.

Second proposal: In addition to non-relational properties, things must also have relational properties. That sounds more promising, but now we have to *differentiate*. There are *purely general* non-relational properties and, on the other hand, properties that are (of course) general, but also dependent on individual objects. They are usually referred to as *object-dependent* properties.

Examples:

Living in a city is a *purely general* property.

Living in Xiamen is an *object-dependent* (general) property.

We therefore need to specify the second proposal and consider different *variants*.

Second proposal, variant A: In addition to the non-relational properties, the *purely relational properties* of things must also be taken into account as necessary for their ontic individuation.

But that still doesn’t seem to be enough. For we can imagine the eternal recurrence of the same as a *two-way eternal recurrence* (David Lewis has provided this example for other reasons in *On the Plurality of Worlds*). Then every epoch (and every object in every epoch) has an infinite number of duplicates in *both temporal directions*. So you can’t say that one epoch has more (or fewer) predecessors than another.

In the case of a *one-way recurrence*, the following applies: the first epoch has no predecessor; the second epoch has a predecessor that has no predecessor; the third epoch has a predecessor that has a predecessor that has no predecessor, and so on. This distinction is not possible with a *two-way recurrence*. This possibility of distinguishing between the epochs is not available with two-way recurrence.

So far, these have only been *illustrations* based on imaginary worlds (e.g. worlds with one- or two-way eternal recurrence) whose modal status is uncertain. For all we know, they might be possible. But perhaps they are not.

So, it would be a good idea to also have a *compelling argument* to rule out both the first proposal and variant A of the second proposal. And of course, there is such an argument: we only have to fall back on the principle of generality (PG): General determinations are general and therefore do not individuate.

Here we have a straightforward clash between the PII and the PG if we restrict the range of the predicate variable ‘f’ to purely general properties. Since both PII and PG are obviously true, we must give up the restriction and also recognise impure general relational properties as values of ‘f’. To put it colloquially: for the individuation of things, we must also take into account impure general relations, i.e. object-dependent and/or positional ones.

We therefore need a new variant of the second proposal. In the professional discussions, only two other variants play a role. Both involve (as I will say) *explicitly* object-dependent properties. In one case (*variant B1*) the relevant objects are *material things*, in the other case (*variant B2*) they are *space-time positions*. In the second case, one also speaks of *positional properties*. (Object-dependent properties *in the proper and narrow sense* are dependent on real things).

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Second proposal, variant B1: Object-dependent properties (in the proper and narrow sense).

According to the widespread variant B1, the truth of PII is guaranteed by also admitting as values of the variable ‘f’ relational properties that depend on an individual object, such as the property of living in Xiamen or the property of being a fan of Xabi Alonso (a Spanish football coach). But then, of course, the ontic individuation of the respective ‘object’ – Xiamen there, Xabi Alonso here – is *assumed to be already logically guaranteed*.

In order to avoid *infinite regresses* of ontic individuation, we must therefore postulate that the regresses will sooner or later stop at certain privileged objects whose individuation is self-understood.

Either you say: That individuation is self-understood applies to *all* objects (all objects are “privileged”). Then there are no regresses of individuation, not even finite ones, because any object is individuated by itself.

Or you select a special *privileged class* of objects according to some *criterion* and say: Regresses of individuation stop there, with such special objects.

Either way, objects that are individuated by themselves are said to have a *non-general, individual essential ‘property’* that is necessary and sufficient for their individuation. Such peculiar properties are called *haecceitates* in Latin, singular: *haecceitas*, which can be roughly translated into English as “thisness” or otherwise Latinised as “haecceity”.

But thisnesses/haecceities are *non-general* “properties”, which means that they are themselves (strange) *individuals* rather than properties. They are, we can say, second-order individuals in first-order individuals whose only function is to individuate the latter ontically. At least that is all, as long as no specific aspects of haecceities can be shown to exist for independent reasons.

But if haecceities are second-order individuals, we get another and this time actually *infinite* regress of individuation:

Socrates (a *first-order individual*) is individuated by his haecceity, a *second-order individual* we can call *Socrates-ness*; Socrates-ness in turn is individuated by *its* haecceity, thus by a *third-order individual*: the haecceity of Socrates-ness – and so on upwards without end.

The *alternative*, namely that only a special, privileged class of objects may be endowed with something like haecceities, is never considered; presumably because no justifiable *selection criterion* can be concocted. Surprisingly, however, somewhere in the neighbourhood lies the *solution* that actually works.

As soon as it is brought into play, you can see still another reason why it is systematically overlooked in the professional literature: the *object dependency* relevant here is a rather *im-*

placit one that is not immediately visible. The selection criterion for the relevant objects, on the other hand, is now crystal clear: *these objects must also be subjects*, i.e. embodied persons. We will return to this as the third and only successful proposal.

But first we still need to take a look at *variant B2 of the second proposal*: positional relational properties.

Here, the “objects” on which the relevant relational proportions depend are *positions* in space and time. Either *points* or *regions* can be put forward as positions. Points *are* limits, i.e. non-entities “between” entities; and regions are limited and thus *individuated by limits*, ultimately by points.

Of course, we must *not* now say that the points are individuated by the things whose boundaries they form, for that would be a *vicious circle*. After all, we appeal to points as the *individ-uators* of things and not the other way around. So, we now need *haecceities for the points*. This brings us to the same impasse or aporia as in variant B1.

Conclusion: We can and must reject both the *first* proposal and *both variants of the second* proposal as unhelpful, indeed as aporetic.

Third and final proposal: Perspectival properties; i.e. relational properties that are implicitly dependent on *objects that are also subjects*, i.e. persons.

Things have all kinds of properties. The predicate variable in the PII, that is, ranges over:

- (a) properties that are *purely* general and *non-relational* (being red, being round, ...)
- (b) properties that are *purely* general and *relational* (lying on a table, ...),
- (c) object-dependent properties in the broad sense, i.e.:
 - (c1) object-dependent properties in the narrow sense (walking on the moon, ...),
 - (c2) positional properties (being born in 2002 AD, crossing the equator, ...),
 - (c3) perspectival properties (being past, standing here, ...).

We have seen that *purely general properties* (type a and type b) according to the PG are not sufficient for the ontic individuation of things. We therefore also need *object-dependent relational properties* according to type c. The objects in question are either real (material) *objects* (type c1) or spatiotemporal *positions* (type c2) or such ‘objects’ that are also *subjects*: embodied persons (type c3).

If we wanted to be satisfied with properties of *types c1 and c2*, we would have to postulate *haecceities* as very artificial individuator specifically for this purpose (i.e. *ad hoc*) in order to guarantee ontic individuation – individuator about which there is nothing else to know. But this measure disqualifies itself not only because it is *ad hoc and empty*, but also and above all because it would lead to an *infinite regress* of ever higher order haecceities.

We must therefore say that the variable ‘f’ must also range over *perspectival properties* (type c3) so that the PII can be harmonised with the PG or so that ontic individuation is possible. And this theoretical measure is not an ad hoc postulate, but *theoretically free of charge*. After all, perspectival properties exist anyway, because embodied subjects exist anyway. These subjects must be embodied (and know a priori that they are embodied) in order to be able to refer indexically to things and to individuate them epistemically on the basis of their perspectival properties.

We already know all this on the basis of the *theory of the a priori presuppositions* of reference that we discussed last time. Quite apart from this, it would be *pragmatically inconsistent* to deny the existence of subjects, because only a subject can deny something. It is therefore an

indisputable fact that subjects exist. In order to reconcile the PII and the PG, we only need to explicitly add that this indisputable fact is *also logically necessary*.

We have thus proved the previously announced *subjectivity thesis*.

Embodied subjects form the privileged class of objects that have *something like a haecceity* and can therefore stop all regresses of ontic individuation by their mere existence. They – that is, we – do not need to do anything special for this. The Big Bang, for example, is ontically individuated because it has the perspectival property of having taken place 13.8 billion years ago. We don't have to do anything for its individuation, we don't even need to know anything about it. *It suffices that we are there now* and relate indexically to our surroundings. That is all there is to it.

We have something like a haecceity because we give it to ourselves in our a priori self-consciousness. This is what the theory of the a priori presuppositions of reference teaches us. Our 'haecceity' is therefore initially only an epistemic fact: we individuate ourselves epistemically a priori. But this epistemic self-individuation is an original *knowledge*, not a mere belief. It therefore has *ontic consequences*.

Quite apart from this, referring subjectivity is *necessarily embodied*. It has no body, but is its body (its living and thinking body). This is why the a priori epistemic that characterises subjectivity is at the same time corporeal. In subjects, their epistemic and their ontic self-individuation therefore *coincide*.

It is important to realise that the perspectival, inner-worldly and non-omniscient view on the real, which is characteristic for embodied subjects, cannot be trumped by an omniscient *God's eye view from nowhere*. Reality itself is such that it can only be known through the imperfect *view from somewhere* inside the world. In the supposed God's-eye view from nowhere, the PII could not be harmonised with the PG. This means that the God's-eye view would be self-contradictory.

This is a result that seems to have consequences for the philosophy of religion and, more specifically, negative consequences for a *theistic philosophical theology*. We will address this problem in the eighth lecture.

7. Free will and determinism (Tue, 07.05.2024, 16–18)

In this lecture I would like to argue that the arrow of time is only intelligible if we assume that we can initiate new causal chains in free actions. On the other hand, a strict causal determinism according to natural laws holds. I discussed this problem in my (Chinese) book on truth, time and freedom (see lecture 4), chapter X, and proposed a solution there that I would like to present in the lecture.

In the fifth lecture I argued that we must know a priori that *time is nomologically predetermined* and that this distinguishes it from space. It is then up to *physics* to investigate the nomological predetermination experimentally and to recognise the fundamental *laws of nature* in detail. Physics therefore also distinguishes between space and time on the basis of its own knowledge.

However, nomological determination applies equally *in both directions of time* and is therefore not sufficient to distinguish between the future and the past (and to mark the present *as* the present). In a non-fundamental theory, *thermodynamics*, physics states that entropy (the measure of disorder) increases with time in closed systems (second law of thermodynamics). This is a *statistical law* that has no application to individual molecules, let alone atoms and subatomic particles, and accordingly fundamental physics, i.e. *microphysics*, treats both directions of time equivalently. The parameter *t* of quantum mechanics has no pointed direction, no “arrow”. Thermodynamics, too, can only *describe* the asymmetry of future and past (or later and earlier), not *explain* it.

Today I will extend the theory of the general *a priori presuppositions of singular reference* (of lecture 5) to the problem of the arrow of time. To this end, I will present a libertarian theory of the arrow of time (“Freiheitstheorie des Zeitpfeils”). The topic of *freedom* and the topic of *time*, i.e. the philosophy of action and morality on the one hand and the philosophy of time on the other, belong together. But first I would like to provide a sketchy overview of the philosophy of time.

John M.E. *McTaggart* (1866–1925) distinguished three series of events and three corresponding temporal scales:

the A-series: --- --- --- past --- --- --- present --- --- --- future --- --- →	A-time
the B-series: --- --- --- earlier --- --- --- later --- --- →	B-time
the C-series: --- --- --- --- --- --- [no arrow, the parameter <i>t</i> of QM]	C-time

(It is not entirely clear what exactly McTaggart meant by the C-series. As a *Hegel scholar*, he could also have been thinking of a *logical succession* underlying time, which would then not have a temporal arrow, but a logical one. But for the sake of simplicity, I have interpreted the C-series in such a way that it fits time as it is described in *fundamental physics*: without an arrow, i.e. without internal asymmetry. The only difference to a spatial straight line is then its symmetrical nomological predetermination.)

According to McTaggart, the B-series owes its arrow to the supposedly *subjective* A-series. The B-series therefore only *appears* to be completely *objective*, but it *is not*. Nevertheless, many contemporary philosophers of time treat the B-series (and B-time) as fundamental, the C-series (and C-time) as a quantum mechanical speciality and the A-series (and A-time) as a subjective fiction on our part. These are the so-called *B-theorists* of time.

A-theorists of time (among whom I count myself) consider the modes of time, i.e. the temporal A-determinations, to be irreducible and fundamental. *C-theorists* (but as far as I can see there are none in the philosophy of time) would take the standpoint of the Schrödinger equation of QM and declare the modes and the arrow of time to be unreal or reducible.

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Thomas *Sattig* provides an overview of the currently discussed theories of time in a handbook article on *the nature of time*.² The systematics of his article results from the interplay of *three disjunctions*: (1) *Reductionism* or *anti-reductionism*? (2) *Eternalism* or *presentism*? (3) *Static* or *dynamic* conception of time? – The different answers to these disjunctive questions can then be combined to form different theories of time. I will first explain the disjunctions:

- (1) *B-theorists* advocate *reductionism* with regard to the A-determinations (the modes: past, present and future), while *A-theorists* counter with their *anti-reductionism*.
- (2) According to *eternalism*, all points in time exist equally and absolutely. *Presentism*, on the other hand, claims that only the present time exists absolutely, all other times only in a depotentiated sense. A *variant* or rather *deviant of presentism* also ascribes absolute existence to past points in time, but not to future. Let's call it *presentism-plus-past*.
- (3) According to the *static conception*, time stands still as the unchanging scale of change; according to the *dynamic conception*, time flows and changes in itself, i.e. in time. Therefore, dynamic conceptions require some kind of *two-dimensional view* of (one-dimensional) time.

A combinatorics of the members of these disjunctions provides an *overview of the theories of time* that are currently being discussed. However, four out of eight conceivable approaches have to be dropped as inconsistent.

Reductionism (“no modes”) is not compatible with either dynamic or presentist conceptions, and so the only remaining option for reductionism is an alliance with eternalism and the static view: there is an eternal, unchanging B-time (in fact C-time) which, together with the dimensions of space, forms a *four-dimensional block universe*. This is what the so-called *block universe theory of time* says.

On the *anti-reductionist* side, which adheres to the A-determinations, there is no possible alliance with eternalism and the static view. For an unchanging time, whose points in time all exist absolutely, provides no means of profiling modes of time. There remain the three other anti-reductionist possibilities.

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I will first provide a *table* and then some explanations:

Reductionism, eternalism, static conception:	<i>Block universe theory</i>
Reductionism, eternalism, dynamic conception:	---
Reductionism, presentism, static conception:	---
Reductionism, presentism, dynamic conception:	---
Anti-reductionism, eternalism, static conception:	---
Anti-reductionism, eternalism, dynamic conception:	<i>Moving spotlight theory</i>
Anti-reductionism, presentism, static conception (<i>exotic</i>):	<i>Standing spotlight theory</i>
Anti-reductionism, presentism, dynamic conception:	<i>Cinema theory</i>
Anti-reductionism, presentism-plus-past, dynamic conception:	<i>Growing block theory</i>

² „Die Natur der Zeit“, in: *Handbuch Metaphysik*, ed. Markus Schrenk, Stuttgart 2017, 250-255.

The reductionist *block universe theory* has already been explained.

Anti-reductionism in conjunction with eternalism and the dynamic view, results in the *moving spot light theory* of time, according to which the light of the present moves at a uniform speed along the eternal timeline.

In conjunction with presentism and the static view, anti-reductionism leads to a *standing spot-light theory* of time, which is rarely, if ever, advocated as a theory of time (and which Sattig therefore considers exotic). It fixes the present moment in thought as if it were eternal.

Things are less exotic again when anti-reductionism is combined with presentism and the dynamic view. This results in *dynamic presentism*, which sets the present as absolute, but with the *proviso* that it changes qualitatively. First, for example, it was characterised by clouds and drizzle, then the sun and a rainbow shine in it. In this way, it becomes a *changing, internally moving image*, as we know it from the cinema. The dynamic presentism thus conceived can therefore be called the *cinema theory* of time.

This is where *presentism-plus-past* becomes relevant as an alternative to simple presentism. According to it, the past and the present exist, but the future does not. The future is merely the open direction in which the block of the past is constantly extended at the front of the present. This is what the *growing block theory* of time says.

Perhaps it is instructive to compare Plato's and Aristotle's classical definitions of time with this list. *Plato* conceives of time as the present and defines it in the sense of the moving spot-light theory as "an image, progressing by number, of eternity abiding in the One" (*Timaeus* 37d). The standing spotlight theory could therefore apply to eternity, according to Plato.

Aristotle understands time as an aspect of motion, namely as the number (of units of measurement) of motion according to earlier and later (Phys. IV 11, 219b1f.). This fits in well with the *block universe theory*, as does Kant's eternalist remark: "Time [...] remains and does not change" (*Critique of Pure Reason*, B 224f.).

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A brief assessment of these five standard theories:

We already know that the *dynamic conceptions* require a *two-dimensional view* of time. This applies to the moving spotlight theory, the cinema theory and the growing block theory. Of course, this does not disprove them, especially since a two-dimensionality is unavoidable for all A-theorists. But the two-dimensionality makes the dynamic approaches comparatively complicated compared to the simple block universe theory.

Secondly, as far as the *presentist views* are concerned, i.e. the standing spotlight theory, which we can neglect, and the cinema theory, they have a grounding problem with regard to the past, which is not supposed to exist absolutely. But how can what we consider to be past, such as dinosaurs, leave 'metaphysical traces' in the present?

The *block universe theory* can be credited with the fact that it is directly compatible with the *special theory of relativity*, which conceives of a (3+1) dimensional block universe. If this block is broken down into its spatial and temporal parts, the standards of simultaneity vary from one inertial system to another (in deviation from the pre-relativistic block universe theory); but all systems are on an equal footing according to the theory of relativity, and it applies equally in all of them.

The *anti-reductionist theories*, on the other hand, still have to be processed before they fit the theory of relativity. To this end, some frame of reference will have to be identified as the only authoritative one. Then there will no longer be any contradiction with the theory of relativity, but there will still be motives for criticism. This is because the preference for a reference

frame goes beyond physics, which does not emphasise a particular reference system. But physics as a theory of time and space is *incomplete* anyway, as can be seen from the *subjectivity thesis*, which already emphasises a subject's own frame of reference as the decisive one for space (and then of course also for time).

It is argued *against the block universe theory* that the assumption of static time is at odds with our experience of time. The *dynamists* have an advantage here because they can say: According to our theory, we experience time exactly as it really is. The block universe theorists could ask the dynamists back: How do you empirically perceive *the presence of the present*? The answer of the subjectivity thesis and the theory of a priori presuppositions of reference is: Empirically not at all, but we know the present a priori as the horizon of perception. Empirically perceived is then only that which is present.

Sattig's handbook article does not mention *C-time* and thus reliably reflects the state of the debate, which seems to regard the arrow of time as something whose explanation is the sole responsibility of physics. But physics, as I said, only recognises C-time in its fundamental theory and can indeed state the arrow – in (non-fundamental) thermodynamics in connection with the increase in entropy – but not explain it. Consequently, the reductionists would have to include the arrow of time in their reductionist programme and *all become C-theorists*.

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So much for a very general *overview sketch* on the subject of time. Now let us extend the theory of the a priori presuppositions of singular reference (from Lecture 5) to the modes and the direction of time: We must be able to distinguish a priori the present, the future and the past in order to understand ourselves as frames of reference for indexical temporal reference.

Now, of course, we can say that we understand the *modes* of time and then also the *arrow* of time from the *aspects of truth*. But this information is pale and abstract. Because how do we understand the aspects of truth? Couldn't we just as well say the other way around: we understand the aspects of truth from the modes of time?

The *past* is what it is, independent of anything we can do now or in the future. This (one could say) gives the realist aspect of truth its content and profile.

The *future* is open to us within a certain, very small framework. Most of what is to come will happen without our intervention, like the rising and setting of the sun and the moon and so on and so forth. But on a modest scale, *what will be depends on us*. Should I travel to Shanghai next week or not? When I ask myself this question, I consult with myself and assume that I am free to decide in favour of or against the trip. Isn't this the *origin of everything pragmatic and normative* and therefore also the origin of the pragmatic-normative aspect of truth?

And as far as the *present* is concerned, isn't the last peak of the past and at the same time the basis for the future what presents itself to me in my current perception?

One could perhaps most usefully say that the modes of time and the aspects of truth are of the same origin and are based together on the essential *aspects of subjectivity*. (Incidentally, the field of consciousness of subjectivity is the entire objective space-time system. With subjectivity we therefore have both subjectivity and objectivity, thinking and being, in view together, thus also *truth* and its aspects).

The aspects of subjectivity are what *Kant* calls the *faculties of the soul*: the faculty of *cognition* (present), the *feeling* of pleasure and pain (past) and the faculty of *desire* (future). But ultimately it is pointless to *prioritise* here; in the end we are dealing with a holistic system of three-aspect structures that relate to and depend on each other like the highest genera in Pla-

to's *Sophist*. Like these, the philosophical subjects – truth, time, subjectivity (...) – form an organic whole.

Still another three-aspect structure comes into play here, interwoven with the previous ones: the past is characterised entirely by the a priori, logical *necessity* of such and such a differentiated empirical, nomological *necessity*: It is *logically* necessary that there are fundamental *nomological* necessities that must be discovered empirically. Time is subject to them, and indeed the *past* completely.

In the default position, this also applies to the future; but here freedom enters the picture, albeit on a small cosmic scale. Within the narrow limits of my personal sphere of action, the future is characterised by *freedom* of choice. And the transfer point from the necessary past to the partially open future is the *actual* present.

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Since thinking subjectivity in its original self-individuation and spatiotemporal self-localisation must in a certain way understand itself as active, the arrow of time is understood primarily from the future, i.e. from the direction of our *freedom of will and action*. The understanding of the present is the underlying basis, and the understanding of the past follows straightaway.

What I decide freely must have a certain *independence from natural law* (otherwise it would be nomologically determined, not free), but must not be absolutely random, because then my will would be a random generator whose 'decisions' would surprise me again and again. So, we need a *law of freedom* that must be of a completely different kind than the laws of nature (not just more of the same).

The law of freedom is of its own kind because, unlike the laws of nature, we know it *a priori*, from pure reason, and because there can be exceptions – *anomalies* – which do *not invalidate* the law, but which, conversely, are invalidated by the law: They are factual, but they are not meant to be.

In other words, the law of freedom is (a) *purely rational* and (b) *normative*. It demands, just as *Kant* thought, that I act on the basis of principles (maxims) that can be *universalised*. This is the so-called *categorical imperative*: Act in such a way that the maxim of your will could be thought of as a general law without contradiction.

We would not understand the arrow of time if we were not free. On the other hand, time is nomologically predetermined according to natural laws. This gives rise to a *conflict* between *determinism* according to natural laws and the reality of *freedom*: on the one hand, everything that happens in time is subject to determinism; on the other hand, freedom demands partial independence from natural laws.

Kant calls this independence *transcendental freedom* (the negative concept of freedom). I call it the *cosmological* or presentational *aspect* of freedom. The autonomy of the will according to the law of freedom is the *practical* or *normative aspect* of freedom (Kant: its positive concept). Thirdly, there remains the *arbitrary choice* between given alternatives: the *electoral aspect* of freedom, which corresponds to the realist aspect of truth.

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Now to the problem of *determinism*. As is appropriate, we take *C-time*, i.e. the parameter *t* of QM, as the basis for nomological determinism. What is favourable for the theory of freedom is that determinism is of a conditional nature: *If* the world is in state *z* at time *t*, *then* it is in state *z'* at time *t'*. This *conditional determinism* holds for *both C-temporal directions*.

There could therefore be *room for freedom* in the respective *antecedent conditions*, thus in the last analysis in the initial conditions of the cosmic process. These initial conditions are

characterised by a certain degree of internal indeterminacy. However, since we are working with C-time, there is as yet *no asymmetry between the beginning and the end*. We could therefore just as well refer to the inherent indeterminacy of the final state of the cosmic process. Only with freedom will one side be marked as the beginning and the other as the end.

Without freedom (and apart from the absolute randomness that occurs in measurements according to QM), the (possible) *degree of indeterminacy* of the initial or final conditions would continue to be *inherited* consistently throughout time according to the *laws of nature*.

Since we must assert the reality of freedom as well as nomological determinism, we must conclude that the scope for indeterminacy in the world process must actually be utilised: The *world as a whole* is a little *incomplete in both temporal directions*. If at some point a free action takes place on the timeline, the degree of determinacy grows a little, and in such a way that, according to the laws of nature, it grows equally in both temporal directions. At any rate, this is what we have to say if we want to *reconcile* freedom with determinism.

But this conclusion throws us into various *difficulties*:

Firstly, if the fabric of the world is not fully determined, we would have to assume *truth-value gaps*, just as the anti-realists (Michael Dummett) do, and thus violate (classical) logic.

Secondly, with free actions we would not only make the future more determinate than it would be without our actions, but also the past. Should we assume that we can *act back into the past*? We would not be able to change it: Everything that is already determined would remain as it is. (Since Caesar was murdered, he was definitely murdered, we cannot retroactively save him). But we could create determinacy where the past is still indeterminate.

Thirdly, however, we need freedom as a *symmetry-breaker* between past and future, and this would not be the case with the current proposal as it stands.

Firstly: truth value gaps. We could save classical logic by (a) saying that the principle of the excluded middle, ‘ $p \vee \sim p$ ’, is valid as a *normative* law, and by simultaneously (b) declaring the truth-value gaps to be *inscrutable* in principle: We cannot distinguish them from mere gaps in knowledge. Whenever we believe we have discovered a truth-value gap, logic would command us: *Try harder*, i.e. keep researching, because maybe the supposed truth-value gap is just a knowledge gap (not an indeterminacy in the fabric of the world but only in your web of knowledge.)

Secondly, retroactive effects in the past. We must assume that the increases in determinacy that take place retrospectively in the past are *diffuse and microscopic*. They spread imperceptibly over what has already happened.

But this creates a *new problem* for us. When we act, we do not want to determine the *future* in a diffuse and microscopic way, but rather in a very contoured and macroscopic way (at a certain point). Should I travel to Shanghai next week? Depending on what I decide, the world will be recognisably different.

According to what has been said about truth value gaps, these are inscrutable. That is, if we act out of freedom and want to close a gap, it could always be that there is no gap at all and I will be in Shanghai anyway (or not), no matter what I decide. The future is (at least epistemically) open. So when I act, I don’t know whether I am filling a truth-value gap, but I have to assume it. And sometimes I actually do; because we know *in abstracto* that such gaps exist, even if we can never identify them with certainty *in concreto*.

However, we still do not understand why the truth value gaps in the past can be *diffuse and microscopic* if the gaps in the future are supposed to be *contoured and macroscopic*. The degree, i.e. the *quantum*, of indeterminacy that is eliminated by a free action must be the same in both temporal directions. But the *quality* of the determinacy gained is quite different. However, this difficulty also harbours an *opportunity* with regard to the third problem.

Thirdly: symmetry-breaker. Said opportunity holds out the prospect of the sought-after symmetry break through freedom (between past and future) and at the same time reveals something important about the nature of freedom.

Freedom is internally *asymmetrical*. It creates contoured, macroscopic determinacy to one side, which we therefore call the *future*, and leaves behind a diffuse, microscopic increase in determinacy in the direction that we then call the *past*. It reduces “entropy” forwards at the expense of “entropy” increases backwards. It thus adds “energy” to the world as a whole.

But we have to be careful here. We don't want to violate the *first law of thermodynamics*, according to which energy remains constant overall. So it's not really about energy and entropy, these were just comparisons or metaphors. It's more like what we know from QM – without freedom, only with chance: In measurements, diffuse indeterminacy is transformed into contoured determinacy without the total world energy increasing (or decreasing).

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Freedom therefore changes the whole world, including its past, a little towards more determinacy every time. The world as a whole becomes (a little) new (more complete). This now requires us to activate the *two-dimensional view* of time that all A-theorists must assume. In one dimension (in the *longitudinal* direction), we keep the present determinacy of the world constant, and this is how we do physics. *Transversely*, in the second dimension, the degree of determination of the world grows a little with every free action, which we can now again keep constant in the longitudinal direction. But of course, the growth of determinacy continues as long as free agents exist.

Let us now categorise this *libertarian theory of the arrow of time* into the various alternative theories of time using the table above.

The libertarian theory distinguishes between time in the concrete full sense and the abstract C-time. C-time is to be understood *reductionistically*, *eternalistically* and *statically* in the sense of a *block universe C-theory*. C-time is completely reduced by abstraction for the purposes of fundamental physics and B-time is partially reduced for the purposes of non-fundamental physics (and the other natural sciences), starting from A-time as the complete, concrete, and actual phenomenon of time.

For its part, A-time can be seen as a fusion of C-time and the internally asymmetrical cinema present (according to the *cinema theory*). However, the cinema present can also be understood as a moving spotlight (according to *moving spotlight theory*), because the block universe of C-time gains internal determination through free actions in accordance with a – now libertarian, i.e. non-standard – *growing block theory*.

this way, all four *common theories of time* are somehow incorporated into the libertarian theory of the arrow of time and come into their own. After all, it would be bizarre if there were not a moment of truth in each of them, as there is much to be said in their respective favour. And even the exotic *standing spotlight theory* may not have to remain completely functionless: it may be valid for *eternity*, provided there is any theoretical interest in eternity.

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8. **Happiness and misery** (Sat, 11.05.2024, 15:30–17:30)

Happiness also has three essential aspects that correspond to the aspects of truth and the modes of time (see Lecture 4): pleasure, contemplation and success. Accordingly, Aristotle distinguished three forms of life: the consumptive life of pleasure, the contemplative life of theory and the practical life of politics (*Nicomachean Ethics*, Book I, 1095b14 - 1096a10). However, it is important to integrate these three aspects into a single form of life. This rarely succeeds, and people suffer from natural catastrophes, technical accidents and moral injustice, and in the end, everyone has to die. Kant therefore argued for the so-called postulates of pure reason in the *Critique of Practical Reason*, notably the immortality of the soul and the existence of God. In this lecture, I will discuss the problems of happiness and misery, justice and injustice and the like. As preparation, I recommend Book I of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* and Kant's *Critique of Practical Reason*: Part I (Elementary Theory), Book II (Dialectic of Practical Reason), Chapter II (Dialectic with regard to the Highest Good), = CPR 198–266.

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When we spoke of freedom in the previous lecture, we entered the realm of what Kant, following Aristotle, rightly called *practical philosophy*. Practical philosophy enquires into *the good*: the *good life* and the *ultimate goal* and purpose of all action.

However, Aristotle and Kant had different conceptions of how to approach the question of the good. *Aristotle* placed *happiness* (*eudaimonía*) at the centre. The vast majority of people, he said, consider *eudaimonía* to be the good and the ultimate goal, but they have different conceptions of it, essentially three different kinds of conceptions corresponding to the three *aspects of happiness*. We will come back to this.

Kant, on the other hand, conceived of practical philosophy as the *philosophy of freedom*. Theoretical philosophy is concerned with the conditions of the possibility of natural science, and natural science attempts to recognise the fundamental laws of nature. Practical philosophy, however, enquires into the *purely rational fundamental law of freedom* and examines what follows from this fundamental law for the will and actions of human beings. For Kant, it is this fundamental law of freedom that *defines the good* and the *ultimate goal* of human will and action.

Both Aristotle and Kant *divided practical philosophy* into a theory of *individual* striving, willing and acting and a theory of the *public* sphere or the *political* sphere (the city – *pólis* – or state). Accordingly, Aristotle distinguished between *ethics* and *political science*, Kant between the doctrine of *moral virtues* and the doctrine of *law*.

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Excursus. *Hegel* later differentiated even further in his own philosophy of law, thus taking into account the achievements (or drawbacks) of capitalist modernity, in which a public but non-state sphere had emerged between individuals and their families *on the one hand* and the state *on the other*: *civil or bourgeois society* – in German there is only one word for this: “bürgerlich”.

But in German there are two words for morality: the Latin-based “*Moralität*” and the Germanic-based “*Sittlichkeit*”. And so Hegel could use “*Moralität*” for the individual, internal sphere of will and action and “*Sittlichkeit*” for the intersubjective, external sphere, which he divided into three subspheres: (a) the family, (b) civil society and (c) the state.

It is interesting to note that Hegel includes even the *family* in the sphere of intersubjective *Sittlichkeit* (often translated as *ethical life*). This emphasises the importance of the individual

human being in capitalist modernity, who has to move and operate in three spheres of intersubjectivity: precisely in the family, in civil or bourgeois society and in the state.

While for Hegel, as for Kant, morality is something internal, subjective – the law of freedom applies to me, my *innermost thinking and willing*, in the first person only – the sphere of ethical life is intersubjective. The family and civil society have expectations on me, and so do I in return, and I can assert state law against fellow citizens. Morality and the law of freedom are only *formal*, says Hegel; *substantial* morality (i.e. ethical life) only comes into effect with the factual reality of family and civil society – and substantial law only with the factual state.

However, these were *incidental remarks* intended to make it clear that both Aristotle and Kant, on whom I would like to orientate myself as we proceed, are still missing a side of ethical life that Hegel took into account. But we won't be dealing with this side of things today. I just wanted to mention it: it is important, but not our topic.

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In order to maintain the connection to the previous lecture, let's start with the topic of *freedom*. Both times we will also look at the *opposites*: Unfreedom (heteronomy) and unhappiness (misery).

Freedom has three essential aspects. *Leibniz* calls them spontaneity, contingency and intelligence, *Kant* calls them transcendental freedom, freedom of arbitrary choice and autonomy of the will. Let us label them as the *cosmological*, the *electoral* and the *practical* (or normative or nomological) aspect of freedom.

It is the *cosmological* aspect that is at odds with natural *determinism*, as we saw in the last lecture. According to natural determinism, we cannot initiate new causal chains in the course of the world, and according to the cosmological aspect of freedom, we can. We saw that we needed a *meta-compatibilist theory* of determinism and freedom based on a two-dimensional view of time.

The *electoral* aspect of freedom points to what is *always already given*: a factual situation in which we can act, either by *doing* a certain action or *refraining* from it (and doing something incompatible with it). Thus, the electoral aspect refers to the *realist* aspect of truth, to the temporal mode of the *past* and to the *affective* aspect of subjectivity, i.e. the feeling of pleasure and pain (Kant: "Lust und Unlust").

The practical aspect of freedom is *autonomy*, i.e. literally the *self-legislation* of the will through a purely rational, formal law, through which freedom is positively defined. This law is known a priori to every rational being and its unconditional validity is guaranteed by mere reason. Kant therefore also speaks, deliberately paradoxically, of the *fact of reason*. If there is anything rational in the world, then it is first and foremost the law of freedom.

The law of freedom is formal, that is, it directly determines only the *form of the will* and only indirectly the content. To act freely means to act in such a way that my relevant principle of will (which is only mine, other people may have other maxims) *could* be thought of as a *universal law* for everybody without contradiction.

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A *habitual thief* acts (let us say) according to the maxim of increasing his possessions without physical violence against others (he is not a robber), but otherwise by any means whenever it can be done unnoticed. When he universalises this maxim in his thinking, he finds that a contradiction arises in his willing: If all people acted according to this maxim, he would not be able to keep and enjoy his prey for long. There would then be no institution of property

anymore and therefore no more stealing. The thief's maxim logically cancels itself out in its universalisation.

However, this example *oversimplifies* the matter. You can build conditions and qualifications into your maxims, for example: "If a person is excessively rich, then I will steal from them if I can, and so should everyone else." (That would be a revolutionary socialist maxim, so to speak.) You can come up with a thousand examples in which the formal law of freedom does not clearly determine the content of action.

(This is another reason why *Hegel* attaches great importance to the *substantial* ethical life. The values cultivated in a family and the reputation and honour of a person in civil society as well as the de facto laws of the state must fill the formal law of freedom with content.)

Nevertheless, the formal law of freedom is valid and essential in its own way. It *presses from above*, so to speak, just as my actual actions *press from below*. I find myself acting in different ways and can then ask about my maxims. These are not open to me from the outset. I do not sit in my study and first choose my maxims and then go out to act according to them. Rather, I always find myself already acting (according to my desires and inclinations and according to the requirements of ethical life) and can then begin to ask about my maxims.

Of course, I will try to find universalisable maxims on which my actions are based. If this proves to be too complicated, then perhaps there is something wrong with my behaviour and I ought to correct it. Perhaps I ought to counteract not only certain desires and inclinations, but also certain aspects of ethical life.

In this way, I ought to find a *reflexive equilibrium* (a term coined by John Rawls) between the law of freedom that presses from above (from pure reason) and the factual power of my desires and/or the ethical life I find myself in that presses from below. (In connection with this pressing from below, the concept of *happiness* will come to the fore later).

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Before we move on from the topic of freedom to the topic of happiness, we need to briefly address what can be called *the inner aporia of freedom*. (The outer aporia was that between the cosmological aspect of freedom and natural determinism). The Kantian moral philosopher Carl Christian Erhard Schmid (1761–1812) discovered it as a problem for Kant's theory of freedom, and Kant was ultimately unable to solve the problem.

We will and act freely when we act *autonomously*, i.e. in accordance with the practical aspect and the law of freedom. But in doing so, we are ipso facto acting morally good. When we act morally evil, we do not follow the law of freedom, but rather will and act heteronomously. This means that our will is then determined by external laws, ultimately the laws of nature. (But then our morally evil actions cannot be attributed to us. They happen to us rather than us freely deciding to do them).

We either act freely and morally or unfree and immorally. We are either in the mode of freedom or in the mode of nature. Which mode we are in does not depend on us, but on an external *fate*. Schmid therefore called this thesis *intelligible fatalism*. How can the thesis of intelligible fatalism be *avoided*?

One can refer to the *electoral aspect* of freedom on a second level and say that on this meta-level we have the choice between freedom and unfreedom. But all three aspects of freedom belong together. The choice between freedom and non-freedom would only be free if I were also (a) independent of natural law and (b) self-legislated when choosing. But because of (b), the problem of the first level is then repeated on the second level, and we are at the beginning of an infinite regress in the concept of freedom's causality.

The only way to defuse the inner aporia of freedom, if not to resolve it completely, seems to me to be to say with *Leibniz* that freedom or autonomy has *degrees*. For finite, *corporeal subjects* – and according to the subjectivity thesis there are no others – it is impossible to reach one of the two *poles* of the spectrum of degrees of freedom. We never act in crystal-clear autonomy of reason and never in complete heteronomy of nature.

We always move somewhere on the freedom scale between the poles. The law of freedom commands us to keep *ascending* in the direction of the pole of autonomy. But our *nature* pulls us in the opposite direction. Since we are never completely unfree, our position on the freedom scale can be attributed to us as our free act.

Of course, this proposed solution needs further elaboration. But what has been said is at least a start.

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Because we are physical subjects, we have *natural desires*. This (also) results from the three aspects of our subjectivity: our perception (*cognitive* aspect) is essentially affectively tinted (*affective* aspect), and our affects directly determine our desires (*practical* aspect). This determination is not complete for thinking subjects, however, because the purely rational law of freedom also partially determines our desire. As just mentioned, we are always partly naturally and partly rationally determined.

In view of this, the concept of *happiness* must be introduced into practical philosophy. *Aristotle* understood this term broadly: a happy life includes everything that is relevant to a life, thus ultimately also the rational law of freedom (although Aristotle did not speak of this).

Aristotle distinguished between three dominant conceptions of happiness. *The many* (*hoi polloi*) think of natural desires, the fulfilment of which causes pleasure and the non-fulfilment of which causes displeasure, and lead a *hedonistic life*.

The few and the more noble want to be *successful* in all their lives, including public life in the *pólis*. With Hegel, one could say that they focus on *public ethical life*, which brings authority, prestige and honour to the successful.

The very few consider the *contemplative life* to be the best; but since, according to Aristotle, this life is only granted to the gods, while humans can only ever dwell briefly in contemplation (*theōría*), he himself emphasises above all the practical-political life as the best for humans.

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The *best life* (contemplation) would be *self-sufficient*. We lack nothing in contemplation. The problem that Aristotle saw is that it does not last. *Spiritual masters* who, through meditation and other techniques, have come so far as to remain completely in contemplation even during the most mundane activities and perhaps even under physical suffering and agony, may see it differently. But we will leave them aside here.

The *second-best life*, success and prestige in the polis, is *not* self-sufficient. As long as this second-best life is successful, it is also accompanied by joy, i.e. pleasure (according to the hedonistic aspect of happiness). But whether this life succeeds depends only very partially on myself. Illness, accidents, being wounded in war, being enslaved or killed by enemies and so on and so forth can ruin my life, even though I myself have all the virtues that are necessary for success and honour.

The life of “the many” is neither self-sufficient nor good at all. They confuse the *bonus* that comes with success in the polis: joy and pleasure, with the *goal* of action. The goal must be

success, the pleasure then follows of its own accord. If you make pleasure the goal, you end up missing it too. Because then it becomes insignificant, weak and pale.

Aristotle thus saw the *precariousness* of the *human condition*, but considered the way out – divine contemplation – to be blocked for us. So he recommended settling for the second-best life, and those who fall into misery in the second-best life through no fault of their own are simply *out of luck*. Perhaps their virtues will help them to endure misfortune better than others could. But that's all you can offer them as *consolation*.

The German word “Glück” means both: happiness and (its English cognate) luck. In German you can say: “Glück ist Glückssache”, happiness is a matter of luck. In this way, the word “Glück” encodes the precariousness of human life.

Modernity has tended to narrow happiness down to its *hedonistic aspect*, i.e. to pleasure and displeasure. This leads either to private hedonism or, if you want to take an ethical standpoint, to collectivised hedonism, so-called *utilitarianism*.

Kant objected to both. Although he adopts the narrowed, modern concept of happiness, he bases the ethical standpoint on pure practical *reason*, which contradicts both private and collective hedonism.

However, this then leads to an *interesting theoretical problem*. If moral action is a matter of reason and if justice is one of the requirements of purely rational morality, then reason seems to demand more than it can guarantee. The morally good in *misery* must be a scandal for practical reason, but one that it cannot remedy. Or can it?

Yes and no. In finite spatiotemporal life, it obviously cannot. So in order to remain internally rational, i.e. free of contradictions, reason must postulate something that it cannot theoretically prove.

First, according to Kant, it (reason) must postulate the reality of *freedom*. But according to the libertarian theory of the arrow of time, this is not necessary, because there the reality of freedom is proven.

Secondly, reason must postulate the *immortality of the soul*, because individual subjects should live towards moral perfection, which they can never fully achieve as finite beings in a finite time. They must at least have a chance. Thus immortality.

Thirdly, reason must postulate a *guarantor of justice* that ensures that a person's degree of happiness is in balance with their degree of morality in the long run. If moral self-improvement continues forever according to the second postulate, the happiness of individuals will also tend to increase.

Firstly, the guarantor of justice must be *omniscient* in order to know exactly the degree of morality of all persons. Secondly, the guarantor must be *omnipotent* in order to adjust a person's degree of happiness accordingly. Thirdly, the guarantor must be *completely moral* in order to actually do what he can: ensure justice. These are classic attributes that rational theology ascribes to God. The third postulate is therefore aimed at a personal omniscient, omnipotent and all-good *God*.

This is where the *subjectivity thesis* comes into *conflict* with Kant, perhaps already with his second, but above all with his third postulate of reason. According to the subjectivity thesis, an omniscient subject is impossible. The exact degree of morality of a person is inscrutable, objectively inscrutable. It is as ‘blurred’ as the exact location of a particle whose momentum has been measured (according to quantum mechanics).

Since, on the other hand, the rationality of the law of freedom must also be acknowledged on the basis of the subjectivity thesis, I must find a way of satisfying the rational *imperative of justice* in a different way than Kant did. Admittedly, this is a tricky and *difficult business*, which I cannot report much on here in the short time available.

Finally, I can perhaps reveal a little about my strategy.

Firstly, it is clear that philosophy can no longer *prove* anything theoretically here. So something like a *universal religious standpoint* that is acceptable to all rational beings must be conceived. This religion of reason must be *inclusive*, like the traditional *Chinese* religion, which has integrated Taoism, Confucianism and Buddhism.

Secondly, philosophy cannot even prove that a *world* in which this universal religious standpoint is real is *possible*. It can only repeatedly counter those who claim and argue that such a world is impossible or at least not real. In this sense, philosophy can criticise forms of philosophical *naturalism* and *scientism*.

Thirdly, it can speculate with *Fichte* that thinking individuals who have really come into being can never pass away and that beneath the perceptible space-time system there is a deeper one into which the individuals withdraw with their earthly death.

Fourthly, one does not need a morally bookkeeping personal God, but can trust that justice will be achieved by all individuals becoming happy in divine *contemplation* ultimately. Instead of the personal God of monotheistic religions, the more open concept of *tian* (heaven) in classical Chinese thought would be more fitting here.

But as I said, all this does not belong to philosophy itself, but philosophy can only help such a religious point of view by constantly criticising naturalistic and scientific world views. Scientific naturalism is *demonstrably false* (as witness the subjectivity thesis), whereas the religious point of view could, according to everything we know so far, have the *truth* on its side. It has not yet been refuted.

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9. **Potentials and limitations of philosophy** (Sun, 12.05.2024, 14:10–16:10)

In this last lecture, we will compare some different conceptions of philosophy. In particular, the classical approaches of Plato and Aristotle and the early modern approaches will be contrasted with each other and with the approaches of contemporary analytic and hermeneutic philosophy. Finally, I would like to briefly summarise my own conception of systematic philosophy, which was developed in these lectures.

At the end of the last lecture, we learnt something about the *potentials and limitations* of philosophy.

Philosophy shows, among other things, that thinking corporeal *subjects* like us humans are important, even indispensable, for being and for the existence of beings (things).

It also shows that *scientific naturalism*, the view according to which the specific sciences, in the final analysis theoretical physics, completely describe and explain the world, is *wrong*. The world includes the phenomenal qualities of things (qualia), the extended spatiotemporal field of consciousness of sentient beings (i.e. an aspect of space and time that cannot be described by physics), and in particular the modes of time (future, present, past) and the arrow of time – all of which are phenomena that cannot be explained scientifically.

Philosophy further shows that *pure practical reason* demands more than it can guarantee: *justice*. Even with the best science and technology, we cannot prevent misfortunes and injustices, for example wars, and even if we could in the distant future, it would be impossible to establish justice for those people who have died horribly in the past.

We cannot answer, as *naturalistic philosophers* might, “So what? People are very unimportant in cosmic terms. Why should nature treat them with special care?” Because people are precisely important and indispensable for being; they matter.

Nor can we *merely lament* the injustice that lies in the fact that people are indispensable on the one hand and often have to suffer so terribly on the other – and that they all have to die in the end. For injustice is not only sad, but a scandal, indeed a threat *to reason itself*. For the sake of its inner consistency, reason must therefore postulate a solution to the scandal of injustice.

But philosophy can only *roughly outline* the postulated solution and *cannot prove* that justice is real and actual. The elaboration of the solution no longer belongs to the realm of scientific philosophy, but to a rational belief or *rational faith*, which can be characterised as a universal religious standpoint or attitude.

Philosophy cannot even show that justice is logically *possible*, but only that it is *prima facie* possible and *for the time being*, because its impossibility has not yet been proven. It can only show, for example, that arguments of scientific naturalism against the religious attitude are powerless because naturalism itself is false. And whenever an argument is put forward against the universal religious position, it can and must attempt to refute it. But that is as far as it goes. Here, then, we recognise an *essential limitation* of philosophy.

Of course, this is all based on a certain *conception of philosophy*, namely the one I presented in the fourth lecture: Philosophy is logical archaeology (the search for ever deeper presuppositions) with respect to the fact of truth claims. In this respect, its central and starting concept is the concept of *truth* and the fact that we raise truth claims in thinking and speaking. No other

science investigates this topic, or rather any other science that would do so would turn into philosophy.

I like to ask fellow philosophers what their *idea of philosophy* is. I would like to compare my own idea (logical archaeology of truth) with it and then perhaps modify or expand it. But I am usually *disappointed*. Most of the time, the people I ask don't even know what to say, and then I get *stammering answers* like: We philosophers try to make our concepts more precise; we try to develop clear arguments; we reflect on the results of other sciences; we try to combine the results of the various sciences into a unified world view, etc.

But do the scientists and scholars of *other academic disciplines* not seek precise terms and clear arguments? And isn't the reflection on the various sciences and the synthesis of their results a concern that every educated person can have and that is pursued in good popular *science journals*? Doesn't philosophy have its own subject matter and method?

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I have already presented my own conception of the subject and method of philosophy. But let's take a quick look through the *history of Western philosophy* to see which conceptions can be found in the *classics* of our discipline.

As far as *Plato* is concerned, we have his many *dialogues*, in which he set down some of the essentials of his philosophy in writing, and the reports, especially from Aristotle, on his *unwritten teachings*, *ta dógmata ágrapha*, which he presented orally in the Academy. He obviously wanted to see whether he was understood correctly, which is easier to do orally than in publications.

Judging from the dialogues (I am abstracting from Plato's oral teaching, his *henology*, doctrine of the *One*), he understood philosophy as the *doctrine of being*, the *ousía*, and of what truly is, the *óntōs ón*. These are the **Forms** or the *Ideas*, at the top of which are the most general or highest *genera*, such as being itself, identity, difference etc. The more general, the more real and "the more being" – that seems to have been Plato's position. At the top of the whole cosmos or organism of forms/ideas seems to have been the *idea of the good*, namely the *One*, followed by the *indeterminate duality*. But we abstract from this).

For Plato, ontology is directly linked to epistemology, and this leads us to his conception of the method of philosophy. We *perceive* the things in space that change in time and that are only *half real* – partly real, partly not real – with our *bodily sensory organs*. However, we grasp the forms/ideas in *pre-discursive thinking*, usually indistinctly and as if we had half forgotten them.

But philosophers – and this is where their method comes into play – endeavour to *fully grasp* the forms/ideas and then have the task of translating them into discursive thinking, explicating and *defining* them linguistically. They create *logical images* of what truly exists – accurate images in contrast to the sophists. They do this, at least in the dialogues, through dialectics. They dissect concepts of the respective forms/ideas, divide them up and make sure in dialogues, i.e. *dialectically*, that all really present and all imagined friends of the forms/ideas can follow.

For Plato, *ontology* was inseparable from *ethics*. The central theme of his great dialogue on *The State* is *justice*, *dikaíosýne*, and Plato believed that the *doctrine of the Forms* is both an ontology and a philosophical theory of justice, which also includes the *religious perspective* and can *prove the reality of justice*. Philosophy for him was therefore *less limited* than it seems to me.

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Aristotle departed from Plato with the diametrically opposed thesis: Not the most general is the most real, but everything *general is unreal*, a mere conceptual abstraction. He divided the sciences into *theoretical, practical* and *technical* (“poietic”) and the theoretical sciences into *first philosophy* (*prōtē philosophía*, later called metaphysics), second philosophy (physics) and mathematics.

Metaphysics and *physics* deal with the real and the substantial, the *ón* or the *ousía*; *mathematics* deals with certain abstract features of the real. Metaphysics deals with being insofar as it is, *being qua being* (*to òn hêi ón*), and physics deals with being insofar as it *becomes* (comes into being, changes and passes away).

But Aristotle also defines metaphysics in a second and third way. *Secondly*, it is the science of (ontological) *principles*, and the most certain of all principles is the *principle of non-contradiction*. Interestingly, Aristotle deals with it in metaphysics, not in logic: It is impossible for something to *be* both the case and not the case at the same time.

Thirdly, however, metaphysics is the *theological science*, the science of the immaterial God, who is pure actuality and who moves the cosmos without moving himself. Thus, Aristotle’s metaphysics also goes beyond the spatiotemporal, material cosmos. However, unlike Plato, Aristotle cannot promise a victory of justice. For the Aristotelian God is *indifferent to the world*. He did not create it and moves it (i.e. keeps it cosmically in motion) without intention. He is completely absorbed in himself as a pure life and thought that thinks only itself.

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In *medieval philosophy*, which was determined by the three *monotheistic creational religions* (Hebrew, Christian and Muslim), God naturally had to be conceived differently. This task was the essential *addition* of medieval scholasticism to the Aristotelian and Platonic foundation. The distinction between *ousía*, Lat. *essentia*, and *ón*, Lat. *ens*, which did not exist in Aristotle and which Plato had prepared in the *Sophist*, became important here. For God, both are one; he is his essence and his essence is his being. But for the creatures it is two things: in the act of creation, God first had to add being to their essence in order for them to become actual.

Here, philosophy can progress very far into the realm of *religion*. With *Meister Eckhart*, for example, it can fully cognise this realm, but not with *Thomas Aquinas*. With Thomas, there remains a core area of religion that can only be accessed through divine revelation, not through rational, scientific philosophy.

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Something amazing happened in science in *early modern Europe*. Theorists such as Galileo *Galilei* and Johannes *Kepler*, who were Platonists rather than Aristotelians, departed from qualitative Aristotelian physics.

Plato had developed a largely mathematical model of the world in the dialogue *Timaeus*; but for Plato, mathematics was only responsible for the constant aspect of the cosmos, not for the aspect of becoming. Now, however, mathematics was also applied to becoming – a project that Isaac *Newton* then brought to completion.

Suddenly, physics was just as precise and almost as certain a science as mathematics. Of course, this had consequences for the status and reputation of *metaphysics*, namely very *unfavourable* ones. Compared to physics, metaphysics seemed to be an area of mere *opinion*, an area of endless disputes between the many metaphysicians. So if metaphysics was still to be taken seriously, something had to happen to it.

So the philosophers began to think about the *method* of metaphysics. *Descartes* developed a *method of doubt*: if one first doubts everything and tears down the entire edifice of science,

one finds the indubitable starting point to rebuild it and, above all, to rebuild metaphysics anew and with certainty.

Spinoza, on the other hand, believed that the method of presentation that *Euclid* had chosen for *geometry*, the *ordo geometricus*, should also be applied to philosophy in order for it to become a reliable science. One must therefore begin with definitions and axioms and then logically derive the philosophical theorems from them.

Leibniz went one step further, but only in thought, not in realisation: he would have liked to develop a digital logic on the basis of which philosophy itself would have become a mathematical science. His slogan was: *Calculamus!* Let us calculate. But this remained just an imaginary programme.

So much for early modern *continental* philosophy and its three ‘rationalist’ classics. On the other side of the English Channel, an Englishman, an English Irishman and a Scot, namely *Locke*, *Berkeley* and *Hume*, defended more ‘empiricist’ positions. This was a *more radical* break with ancient and scholastic philosophy than that of the continental rationalists.

Suddenly, *pure reason* was no longer everything in the philosophical *method*, but our *sensory perception* came to the fore as the source of knowledge. It was no longer being that was to be analysed, but the *human mind* and its capabilities. In this sense, *Locke* propagated his “*new way of ideas*”, no longer a way of being and, of course, no longer a way of eternal, substantial Platonic ideas, but of ideas in the human mind or human understanding. *First philosophy*, in other words, turned *epistemological*.

Much later, in *early analytic philosophy*, when *Leibniz*’s fantasy seemed to take shape in *Frege*’s new logic, the slogan of the new way of ideas was modified to the slogan of the *new way of words*.

Analytic philosophy began as a philosophy of language, on the one hand as a philosophy of artificial, formal languages and on the other as a philosophy of ordinary language. First philosophy, which had been *ontology* in the classical tradition and had turned into *epistemology* in early modern empiricism, could now be regarded – at least by some analytical philosophers – as *semantics*, either a priori, formal semantics or semantics of ordinary language (or both).

But all efforts have not helped to turn philosophy into a *secure* (Thomas Kuhn says: mature) *science* like mathematics and physics. I will skip the great attempts of *Kant*, *Fichte*, *Schelling* and *Hegel*. As important as they are, we still have so little time left.

Just a word about *Hegel*: he attempted to critically rebuild metaphysics as a *logical theory without presuppositions* and at the same time to synthesise Plato and Aristotle. His *Science of Logic* and his whole philosophical *system* (logic, philosophy of nature, philosophy of spirit) have thus become a great final chord in the Western tradition of metaphysics. When it became clear that *Hegel*’s logic and *Hegel*’s system were not consensual either, all the dams of the critique of metaphysics broke. Think of *Feuerbach*, *Kierkegaard*, *Marx* and later *Nietzsche*. The second half of the 19th century had broken with metaphysics and put an end to it.

At the same time, however, *three new philosophical trends* emerged that were to shape the 20th century. Firstly, the mathematician Gottlob *Frege* finally developed the new logic that *Leibniz* had perhaps dreamt of, and Bertrand Russell, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Rudolf Carnap in the so-called Vienna Circle and others made it fruitful for philosophy: *analytical philosophy* was born.

Secondly, Edmund *Husserl* returned to the old project of turning philosophy into a rigorous science and developed his *phenomenology*, which Martin *Heidegger* was later able to build on, albeit now explicitly with the thesis that philosophy cannot be a science like mathematics or physics. Rather, it is a *hermeneutic*, not a ‘calculating’, not a theoretical science in the narrow sense. (I confirm and underline this with the subjectivity thesis.)

Heidegger also took up motifs from the so-called existentialist philosophy of Kierkegaard (and Augustine), as did Jean-Paul *Sartre* in a different way, who developed an existentialist phenomenology (an ontology and philosophy of consciousness). Other French philosophers took up Nietzsche’s radical critique of metaphysics and developed it further into post-structuralism.

Thirdly, away from the European continent and the British Isles, the so-called *American pragmatism* of Charles S. *Peirce*, William *James* and John *Dewey* emerged. The *pragmatic aspect of truth* came to the forefront of philosophical truth theory. In the fourth lecture, we talked about how its one-sided emphasis leads to *anti-realism* and a break with classical logic. But since the continental analytical philosophy emigrated from Germany and Austria to America during the Nazi era, pragmatism was able to combine with analytical philosophy of language to form *contemporary American philosophy*, so that the realist aspect of truth also came into its own again, partly against pragmatism.

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This overview is of course highly *incomplete*. The *Marxist* tradition, for example, which was continued both in France and in the so-called Critical Theory of the Frankfurt School, especially by Theodor W. *Adorno*, should also be considered. But that may be enough. After all we are concerned with the question: *What is philosophy and what can it achieve?*

We all need to think about this and now *you* need to think about it so that when you are asked about your *idea of philosophy*, you can give a smart and informative answer and not stammer like many professional philosophers of our time.

I have given you my own answer in these lectures. I should add that

- the thesis of the threefold structure of truth (lecture 4),
- the antinomy thesis (end of lecture 3),
- the theory of the a priori presuppositions of reference (lectures 5 and 7),
- the subjectivity thesis (lecture 6),
- the thesis of the extended consciousness (lecture 3),
- the thesis of the readability of things (lecture 3) and
- the theory of the aspects of freedom and of happiness (lecture 8)

(plus further theses) can be combined into a doctrine that is not a theoretical science in the narrow sense like mathematics and physics, but a *hermeneutical philosophical science*. It is a science from a particular inner-worldly standpoint and it must attempt to relate the various standpoints to one another through discussion. (This is in line with the recently much-discussed phenomenon of dissent among well-informed epistemic equals and helps to explain this phenomenon). Philosophical science conceived in this way is also more realist than pragmatist. I have therefore called it *hermeneutic realism*. But some people think I could also call it hermeneutic idealism. Either way, it is an a priori hermeneutic-logical archaeology of the fact of truth.

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