

Chpt 1 Ontology

The present chapter will not seek to discover any final ontological results. Rather it will attempt to give the reader a feeling for the problem ~~and~~ an image of what I will be seeking as the subject develops through the book.

Simply put, ontology seeks to discover what is. The simple answer is "Everything," as pointed out by Quine.¹ The problem is that disagreement may occur as to what is included in everything.

It might seem that disagreement is impossible. Suppose someone claims, "The golden mountain does not exist." It seems that this person is claiming that there is something, the golden mountain, which however fails to exist. Russell took this view in The Principles of Mathematics (1903)

~~of which the golden mountain is an example. It is not possible to say that the golden mountain does not exist, while none exist.~~

The existence of such things as round squares disturbed Russell however, and he devised the theory of description. With this theory of description, it becomes possible to deny that something exists without attributing to it any sort of being or subsistence. The procedure is to translate a statement in which a description occurs into an equivalent statement in which no such description occurs. "The golden mountain does not exist" can be translated ~~as~~ "There is no x such that x is a golden mountain and such that for any y , y is a golden mountain implies $x=y$."

This theory of Russell's was first presented
in his article "On Denoting" in Mind (1905)

~~Quine discusses a number of topics, primarily
about universals, which are not of immediate
concern in my endeavor. However the
thrust of his discussion is apparent.
Names can be replaced by descriptions, and
descriptions are equivalent to
statements involving only variables
where names would ordinarily go. Therefore
to be is to be the value of a variable.~~

~~Perhaps this is not as clear as it seems.
But of course, it is not.~~

Now, if Quine is correct, what is
ontology. Such things as universals might
be examined to see if there is reason to
think they are never the value of a variable.
But ontology is a broader subject than this,
or so it seems to me. It seeks the ^{general} nature
of what ^{actually} exists, ~~but~~ but not trivial details,
eg it is an ontological question whether there
are particles which obey ^{the} laws of physics (or some
such laws) but not an ontological question whether
an electron is in a particular trajectory.
In this sense, ontology is the study of
what descriptions are significant. ~~or~~ Rather
since a description can be generated from any
predicate or relation, the study of what
predicates and relations are significant.

apt 2 ~~Monism~~ Monism vs Pluralism

The first topic I wish to discuss in ontology has to do with the old dispute between monism and pluralism. There are two forms of this dispute. In one form, it is argued either that there is only one thing or that there are numerous things. On the other form it is argued either that there is only one kind of things (say minds or material objects) or more than one kind of things (say minds and material objects).

It is easily observed that certain combinations of these positions are incompatible. Thus if one says that there is only one thing, one must admit that there is only one kind of thing. The first division I will call quantitative and the second qualitative. The following chart shows the different combinations of the positions and their consistency or inconsistency.

CASE	QUANT	QUAL	
1	MON	MON	CON
2	MON	PL	INC
3	PL	MON	CON
4	PL	PL	CON

Thus there is only one inconsistent case, the one previously mentioned. It remains to discuss the other cases.

Case 1 asserts that there is only one thing. Superficially this view seems obviously wrong. I have experiences of a large number of objects around me, of my own part, and if I am not a philosopher I will even believe things exist even when I don't experience them.

However, the situation is not so easily settled. It is ^{logically} possible for me to maintain the position that I am the only extant, or, more precisely, my current state of consciousness is the only extant. The objects of my senses are all illusory. ~~Thus~~ Thus case 1 is possible, but it is an uninteresting possibility, and makes ~~an~~ writing books silly.

Case 3 asserts ^{that} there are numerous things but that they are all of one kind. A precise statement is needed as to what constitutes different kinds of things. It is probable that there will be differences between any two things, even if they are of the same kind.

The old division of mind and matter may be a useful illustration. Suppose then that there are two distinct realms - one composed of minds, and the other composed of material objects. A certain group of predicates and relations will hold among minds, another set will hold among material objects. However if a predicate or relation applying to minds is applied to material objects the result is nonsense and vice versa.

3 Neutral monism

Russell shows in The Analysis of Matter how the duality of mind & matter may be overcome. His method will require revision as I am using a different theory of time. However, for now, let us suppose we have a way to make statements about ~~the~~ present & at least certain past ~~the~~ facts. Let us also use our own individual awarenesses as models of what any thing is. Thus each thing is a perspective. ~~Each~~ Each ~~perspective~~ perspective is a structure of ^{sensations} ~~perceptions~~. ~~At least~~ In some perspectives, at least some of the sensations are conscious.

Superficially, sensation seems to be sensation of something. This is known as the intensionality of consciousness. Here it is a slightly broader concept, as sensations need not be conscious.

I believe this is a fundamental & very important element of truth in this theory of intensionality. However it is misleading as ordinarily presented, as I think. I do not believe that there is a object of sensation. Rather, there is a sense of direction inherent in sensation, as well as the quality of the sensation. The sense of direction being due to the structure of the sensation in question. Thus there is a structure of visual sensation in visual space. From this structure it is possible to derive directions in visual space and a quality can be assigned to each direction in a natural way.

We now in a position to give an idea of how material objects can be defined. ~~It is noted that if a material object is situated~~
In ordinary terms, if a ~~particular~~ material object

is in a particular place, then there will be perspective surrounding it symmetrically, obeying the laws of perspective. It is not necessary that such an object of the sensation be supposed to have an independent existence.

Suppose light reflects off of a penny at time 0. At a time t (t sec later) a surface ct (c the speed of light) will have the appearance of the penny at time 0, unless there is an opaque object interfering. Thus to say there was ~~not~~ a penny t sec ago at coordinate (x_0, y_0, z_0) is to say that at all coordinates (x, y, z) such that $\sqrt{(x-x_0)^2 + (y-y_0)^2 + (z-z_0)^2} = ct$ there is now an appearance of the penny.

~~And this would need to be repeated to depict the penny.~~ This is only a rough illustration but it ~~is~~ ^{is} ~~not~~ ^{is} to get the idea across.

The ^{material} penny is defined in terms of its appearances. Matter is the objects capable of definition through the interrelation of appearances given by physics.

Mind is defined in a similar way except that the laws of ~~psychology~~ psychology rather than physics are involved.

4 Change.

We have an immediate sense of change, and in addition memories of the past, so far as ~~any~~ these are connected they ~~cause us to~~ existences of the past are consistent with each other. Just as there seem to be objects of sensation in ruin etc, there seem to be objects of memory (really a pseudo-instantiation). However the memory is now. The object past, ~~the~~ the object is gone, lost forever. However only things that exist can have properties and relations. Past things do not exist. Thus past things cannot have properties or relations. This is important must be remembered.

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1 Wvo Q Lpov p l
2 BR PotM p