

It's now clear to me that my reflection on "ordinary objects" (27 September 2004) can hardly be right.

If we have existential experience of the possible as the more or less indeterminate determinable—and this we certainly do have in experiencing the future—then we have all the existential experience that is necessary in order to have concepts of "ordinary" as well as "extraordinary" objects, i.e., species, genera, and categories as well as transcendentals and existentials. This is so, at any rate, if we allow as how, in the nature of the case, ordinary objects, not being determinates but determinables, cannot be adequately distinguished, anyhow. So my thought that our concepts of ordinary objects can apply, not through our existential experience, but only through our empirical experience is simply wrong.

Also wrong, I now see, is simply lumping "individualities" together with species, genera, and categories as yet another kind of ordinary object (hence my having eliminated it from my reference to the specific kinds of such objects above). This obviously won't bear careful reflection, since it could be true only by ruling out the possibility of speaking properly, as we must, not only of the individualities of ordinary individuals but also of the individuality of God. If God is, literally, an individual, albeit also, literally and properly, *the* (universal) individual, then God has and must have, literally, an individuality, even if it also be, literally and properly, *the* individuality, i.e., not only itself a transcendental, and so not an ordinary but an extraordinary object, but also the one self-individuating transcendental. (True, any individuality is "self-individuating," its being so belonging to the very concept of such. But God alone is individuated as such solely by a transcendental, or extraordinary object, any other individual being individuated as such only by nontranscendental or ordinary objects.)

Accordingly, so far as I can see now, "individuality" has to have at least three possible meanings: (1) when it refers to the individuality of any ordinary, because particular, individual; (2) when it refers to the individuality of any ordinary because particular individual that is also self-understanding, i.e., an

“existent,” in which use it may be replaced by the term “existentiality”; and (3) when it refers to the unique individuality of God as the one universal individual.

My unsolved problem, however, is how to organize these and the several other relevant insights into a consistent, readable summary replacing my earlier efforts to set forth the concepts and distinctions necessary to a neoclassical transcendental metaphysics.

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After further reflection, it seems to me that what I have distinguished as “ordinary because ontic abstracts (= properties = objects), i.e., individualities, species, genera, and categories,” are all alike not only in being “ontic” as distinct from “ontological” determinables, but also in that our concepts of them can apply, not through our existential experience—our original, internal nonsensuous experience of ourselves, others, and the whole—but only through our empirical experience—our derived, external sense experience of ourselves and others in the world—*Mitwelt* as well as *Umwelt*. “Transcendentals” and “existentials,” by contrast, are alike not only in being, in their different ways, “ontological,” as distinct from “ontic,” determinables, but also in that our concepts of them apply only through our existential experience—our original, internal, nonsensuous experiences of ourselves, others, and the whole.

Another relevant reflection is that all that metaphysics as such appears to require, so far as the distinction between types of objects is concerned, is the bare distinction between “ontological” and “ontic” objects—or, as one might say, in a more Whiteheadian vein, “eternal” and “emergent” objects. If objects as such are indeterminate determinables primordially constituted as an infinite, undifferentiated plenum—ontological objects forming the necessary neutral center of the plenum, ontic objects, the continuum of its contingent nonneutral periphery—then the several distinctions between individualities, or *infima species*, on the one hand, and *summum genus*, or categories, on the other, can only be more or less inadequate, anyhow. Their only use, indeed, is to indicate that there is a range of differences between ontic or emergent objects as all more or less indeterminate determinables, as distinct from the two extremes of ontological or eternal objects, on the one hand, and ontic or temporal subjects, on the other.

My question, then, is whether it may not be sufficient for the purposes of a proper transcendental metaphysics, as distinct from a constructive philosophy mediating empirical with existential knowledge, simply to distinguish between (1) transcendentals and existentials as, in their different ways, ontological objects; and (2) all other ontic objects, whatever their different degrees of indeterminateness (perhaps adding a parenthetical reference such as “e.g.,

individualities, species, genera, and categories"). In any case, the distinction between (1) and (2) seems perfectly clear-cut. Transcendentals and existentials are necessary conditions of the possibility either of concreteness as such, in the case of transcendentals, or of self-understanding concreteness, in the case of existentials. Therefore, they are both given necessarily in our existential experience—as unconditionally necessary, in the case of transcendentals, as conditionally necessary, in the case of existentials. All other ontic objects, by contrast, being necessary conditions of the possibility only of certain contingent kinds of concreteness and not of others, are given only contingently, if at all, in our empirical experience.

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